

Social Science

# OUR PASTS-I

TEXTBOOK IN HISTORY FOR CLASS VI



राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान और प्रशिक्षण परिषद्  
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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 : Ashok Srivastava  
Division

Chief Production : Shiv Kumar  
Officer

Chief Business : Gautam Ganguly  
Manager

Chief Editor : Naresh Yadav  
(Contractual Service)

Assistant Production : Rajender Chauhan  
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## 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 to be 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

(iv)

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 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.

New Delhi  
20 December 2005

*Director*  
National Council of Educational  
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## **TEXTBOOK DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

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### **CHIEF ADVISOR**

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

### **ADVISOR**

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### **MEMBERS**

Anil Sethi, *Former Professor*, Department of Education in Social Sciences, NCERT

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Jaya Menon, *Reader*, Department of History, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh

N.P. Singh, *Principal*, Rashtriya Pratibha Vikas Vidyalaya, New Delhi

P.K. Basant, *Reader*, Department of History and Culture, Faculty of Humanities and Languages, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

Ranabir Chakravarti, *Professor*, Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

Shuchi Bajaj, *Post-Graduate Teacher (History)*, Springdales School, New Delhi

Vishwa Mohan Jha, *Reader in History*, Atma Ram Sanatan Dharma College, Delhi University, New Delhi

### **MEMBER-COORDINATOR**

Seema S. Ojha, *Lecturer*, Department of Education in Social Sciences, NCERT.

## Our National Anthem

*Jana-gana-mana adhinayaka, jaya he  
Bharata-bhagya-vidhata.  
Punjab-Sindh-Gujarat-Maratha  
Dravida-Utkala-Banga  
Vindhya-Himachala-Yamuna-Ganga  
Uchchhala-jaladhi-taranga.  
Tava shubha name jage,  
Tava shubha asisa mage,  
Gahe tava jaya gatha.  
Jana-gana-mangala-dayaka jaya he  
Bharata-bhagya-vidhata.  
Jaya he, jaya he, jaya he,  
Jaya jaya jaya, jaya he!*

Our National Anthem, composed originally in Bangla by Rabindranath Tagore, was adopted in its Hindi version by the Constituent Assembly as the national anthem of India on 24 January 1950.

## WHY STUDY HISTORY ?

This year, in Class VI, you will read history. It is part of a bigger group of subjects known as Social Science. Social Science helps us understand the working of our social world. It tells us about geography, the way the economy works, and the manner in which social and political life is organised. Most parts of Social Science other than history tell you about the world in the present. History will help you understand how this present evolved. It will tell you about the past of the present.

When we live in a society, we become used to the world around us. We begin to take that world for granted. We forget that life was not always the way we see it. Can you, for instance, imagine a life without fire? Can you think of what it is to live in a society where the cultivation of crops was unknown? Or, what it was to live at a time when roads and railways did not exist, and yet people travelled long distances? History can take us into these pasts.

History in this sense is an adventure. It is a journey across time and space. It transports us into another world, another age, in which people lived differently. Their economy and society, their beliefs and faiths, their clothes and food, their settlements and buildings, their arts and crafts – everything was different. History can open doors into such worlds.

You may shrug your shoulders and say “Why should we bother about pasts that are no longer with us, pasts that have gone by?”

But history is not just about the past. It is about the present. The society we live in has been fashioned by those who came before us. The joys and sorrows of their daily lives, their attempt to grapple with the problems of their time, their discoveries and inventions, slowly transformed human societies. These changes were often so gradual, so seemingly small, that their impact was not noticed by people at that time. Only later, when we return to the past, when we study history, can we begin to see how these changes happened, and we can observe their long-term effect. By reading history we can understand how the modern world has emerged over long centuries of development.

The book that you will study this year will take you back to our ancient pasts. Over the next two years you will continue your journey through the history of subsequent periods.

In this book you will read not just about the kings and queens who lived in ancient India, and about their conquests and policies. You will learn about hunters and peasants, crafts people and traders. You will see how fire came to be used, and iron tools were discovered; how wheat and rice began to be cultivated, and villages and towns developed. You will read about pilgrims and saints, buildings and paintings, religions and beliefs. You will find out that history is not only about great men. It is also about the lives and activities of ordinary women, men and children. History is not only about political events, it is about everything that happens in society.

The book will also help you understand how historians come to know about the past. Somewhat like detectives, historians follow clues and traces left by people who lived in the past. Everything that survives from earlier times – stone tools, traces of plants, bones, written material and pictures, ornaments and implements, inscriptions and coins, buildings and sculpture, pots and pans — can tell us something about the past. Historians and archaeologists study these sources and try and understand them. In this book, you will see many of these sources and find out how historians study these.

But studying history can help us understand more than the past. It enables us to develop important skills and qualities. When we try and enter another world, we have to learn how to do this — to understand people whose lives were different. As we do this, we open up our minds and break out of our small present-day worlds. We begin to see how other people may think and act. This can become a learning experience that enriches us in many different ways.

So, before you shrug your shoulders, ask yourself one question: Do I want to know who I am? Do I want to understand how this society works? Do I want to understand the world in which I live? If you do, then you will need to know how our societies have evolved. And how our pasts have shaped the present.

Neeladri Bhattacharya

CHIEF ADVISOR

HISTORY



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The maps in the book have been drawn by K. Varghese of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, and Shyam Narain Lal, Department of History, Jammu University. Subhadra Sengupta copyedited and proofread the manuscript. Animesh Roy and Ritu Topa of Artt Creations, New Delhi, designed and typeset the book. We would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation of their efforts.

While every effort has been made to acknowledge the source of illustrations, we apologise for any omissions that may have inadvertently taken place.

We look forward to more feedback on the book, and hope to improve on it in future editions.

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## CONTENTS



Foreword	iii
Why Study History?	vii
1. WHAT, WHERE, HOW AND WHEN?	1
2. ON THE TRAIL OF THE EARLIEST PEOPLE	11
3. FROM GATHERING TO GROWING FOOD	22
4. IN THE EARLIEST CITIES	32
5. WHAT BOOKS AND BURIALS TELL US	43
6. KINGDOMS, KINGS AND AN EARLY REPUBLIC	54
7. NEW QUESTIONS AND IDEAS	65
8. ASHOKA, THE EMPEROR WHO GAVE UP WAR	75
9. VITAL VILLAGES, THRIVING TOWNS	87
10. TRADERS, KINGS AND PILGRIMS	99
11. NEW EMPIRES AND KINGDOMS	111
12. BUILDINGS, PAINTINGS AND BOOKS	122



## IN THIS BOOK

LOOK OUT FOR THESE

Definitions

Source

Additional  
information

Elsewhere

KEYWORDS

SOME IMPORTANT  
DATES

Imagine

Let's recall

Let's discuss

Let's do

- You will find that each chapter is *introduced* by a young girl or a boy.
- Each chapter is divided into sections. Read, discuss and understand each section before proceeding to the next.
- Some chapters contain *definitions*.
- Many chapters contain a portion from a *source*, clues from which historians write history. Read these carefully, and discuss the questions they contain.
- Many of our sources are visual. Each *illustration* has a story to tell.
- You will also find *maps*. Look at these and try to locate the places mentioned in the lessons.
- Many chapters contain boxes with interesting, *additional information*.
- All chapters end with a section titled *Elsewhere*. This tells you about something that was happening in another part of the world.
- At the end of each chapter, you will find a list of *keywords*. These are to remind you of important ideas/themes introduced in the lesson.
- You will also find some *dates* listed at the end of each chapter.
- In each chapter there are *intext questions and activities* that are highlighted. Spend some time discussing these as you go along.
- And there is a small section titled *Imagine*. This is your chance to go back into the past and figure out what life would have been like.
- You will also find three kinds of activities listed at the end of each chapter — *Let's recall*, *Let's discuss* and *Let's do*.

So, you will find that there is a lot to read, see, think about and do. We do hope you enjoy it.

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