

Exploring Society: India and Beyond

**Social Science Textbook for
Grade 8 | Part 1**



विद्यया ऽ मृतमश्नुते



एन सी ई आर टी
NCERT

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

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SOCIAL SCIENCE TEXTBOOK FOR GRADE 8 PART 1

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Foreword

The National Education Policy 2020 envisages a system of education in the country that is rooted in Indian ethos and its civilisational accomplishments in all fields of knowledge and human endeavour. At the same time, it aims to prepare students to engage constructively with the opportunities and challenges of the 21st century. The basis for this aspirational vision has been well laid out by the *National Curriculum Framework for School Education* (NCF-SE) 2023 across curricular areas at all stages. By nurturing students' inherent abilities across all the five planes of human existence (*pañchakośhas*), the Foundational and the Preparatory Stages set the stage for further learning at the Middle Stage. Spanning Grade 6 to Grade 8, the Middle Stage serves as a critical three-year bridge between the Preparatory and Secondary Stages.

The NCF-SE 2023, at the Middle Stage, aims to equip students with the skills that are needed to grow as they advance in their lives. It endeavours to enhance their analytical, descriptive, and narrative capabilities, and to prepare them for the challenges and opportunities that await them. A diverse curriculum, covering nine subjects ranging from three languages — including at least two languages native to India — to Science, Mathematics, Social Sciences, Art Education, Physical Education and Well-being, and Vocational Education, promotes their holistic development.

Such a transformative learning culture requires certain essential conditions. One of them is to have appropriate textbooks in different curricular areas, as these textbooks will play a central role in mediating between content and pedagogy — a role that strikes a judicious balance between direct instruction and opportunities for exploration and inquiry. Among the other conditions, classroom arrangement and teacher preparation are crucial to establish conceptual connections both within and across curricular areas.

The National Council of Educational Research and Training, on its part, is committed to providing students with such high-quality textbooks. Various Curricular Area Groups, constituted for this



purpose, comprising notable subject experts, pedagogues, and practising teachers as their members, have made all possible efforts to develop such textbooks. The Social Science textbook for Grade 8 — *Exploring Society: India and Beyond, Part 1* — has been prepared for the final year of the Middle Stage. It carries forward the themes and approach of Grades 6 and 7; the focus is on core concepts and major developments. It endeavours to keep students engaged in learning through illustrations, maps, and pictures laid out in an attractive design. There are abundant reflective exercises and activities embedded in the text to support exploration, discovery, and meaning-making. The thematic approach with a multidisciplinary lens continues, helping students understand ideas and concepts holistically. The text integrates the values we desire our students to develop, is rooted in the Indian cultural context, and introduces global perspectives in an age-appropriate manner. For all practical purposes, it has, to my mind, succeeded in its curricular goals: first, to foster natural curiosity among students through a proper selection of content; and second, to employ a pedagogical approach in line with the recommendations of NCF-SE 2023.

However, in addition to this textbook, students at this stage should also be encouraged to explore various other learning resources. School libraries play a crucial role in making such resources available. Besides, the role of parents and teachers will also be invaluable in guiding and encouraging students to do so.

With this, I express my gratitude to all those who have been involved in the development of this textbook and hope that it will meet the expectations of all stakeholders. At the same time, I also invite suggestions and feedback from all its users for further improvement in the coming years.

March 2025
New Delhi

Dinesh Prasad Saklani
Director
National Council of Educational
Research and Training



Letter to the Student

Dear Student,

You have now entered the third and final year of the Middle Stage. In Social Science, this year we will explore more aspects of our country, India, across all five themes — India and the World: Land and the People, Tapestry of the Past, Our Cultural Heritage and Knowledge Traditions, Governance and Democracy, and Economic Life Around Us. You will encounter different types of people who lived in the past, their accomplishments and their mistakes, the impact they had on the economy, society and culture, and what they mean to us today. As you are older now, there will be a little more independent reading, writing and doing through reflective exercises and activities including some small research studies that you would need to take up. There is a little more text in the book as well. As with Grades 6 and 7, we have made ample use of colourful maps, pictures and illustrations, which we hope will help you to visualise better.

Since good education should promote understanding and reflection, we have created opportunities for you to explore, discover, think, imagine, create, ask questions and propose answers.

You will notice how each theme brings together multiple inputs from several disciplines — not only history, geography, political science or economics, but also art, literature and science. This brings us closer to real life and helps us understand the events of today.

In short, you will observe that the threads of the past continue to be part of today's tapestry and give us the design for strengthening it for tomorrow.

Given India's rich past and enormous dimensions — both geographical and human — we were very eager to share a lot with you; deciding what to include and what to leave out led to arguments and heartaches, because all those involved wanted to give you the best. In the end, it has been an enriching and

gratifying experience. We hope it will be an enjoyable experience for you too!

We need to add an important detail. In this textbook, every part of it — text, side box, image or map — can be subject to evaluation and assessment. There are however five exceptions:

- *The quotation or quotations on the first pages of chapters.* Some are straightforward, others offer deep thought. Do not worry if you do not understand them at the first reading; they are meant to stimulate you or inspire you.
- *Wherever we have mentioned in the text, “You need not remember this.”*
- *The diacritical signs on some Sanskrit words* — do look at ‘Your Journey through this Textbook’ in the next few pages to understand what we mean.
- *The Glossary* (at the end of the textbook).

No evaluation should bear on these five aspects.



Your Journey through this Textbook

This is your final year in the Middle Stage — a stage where you've been discovering new ideas, asking questions, and building an understanding of the world around you. By now, you are more confident in studying Social Science and are ready to go deeper. This year, our journey will take us on an exploration and reflection on natural resources and how we use them, the tapestry of our past as political and cultural transformations took place, and how we have organised the functioning of our democracy through our electoral process. Together we'll continue asking important questions about how societies organise themselves, how resources become products, and how citizens participate in governance.

This textbook has interesting features. As you flip through it, you will see colourful illustrations, including pictures, maps and drawings of many kinds. Let us give you a quick tour of the book and its features. Your teacher will also guide you through it.

Each chapter begins with an **inspiring quotation** from a renowned person or text. Read it and let it stay with you. Some of these quotations are profound thoughts. Don't worry if you do not understand right away; you can return to them later, and they can also be discussed in the class. Here's an example —

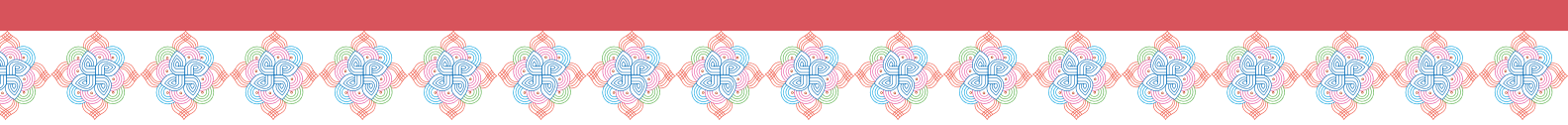


For a country like India, the largest contribution to growth and productivity will probably come about from more efficiently using land, labour and capital, thus they must be used more efficiently.

— Bibek Debroy,
Chairman, Economic Advisory Council
to the Prime Minister (2017-24)



The **main text** is written in simple language. You will learn about people and places in India and beyond.



Biodiversity Loss: The decline in the variety of life on Earth

RESPONSIBLE AND WISE USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES: STEWARDSHIP

Sustaining life on Earth requires that we respect Nature and use natural resources in a way that enables the restoration and regeneration of renewable resources, and the responsible and judicious use of non-renewable ones.

Scientists studying these aspects have warned that the irresponsible treatment of natural resources has led to pollution, **biodiversity loss** and climate change, which has been taking place at an increased pace in recent years.

Technical words are explained in the margin right next to the text. They are also listed in the **glossary** at the end of the textbook. In addition, we have included a few words you may not be familiar with. Do consult the glossary often.

‘The Big Questions’, between three and five, give you an idea of what you are going to explore in the chapter.


The Big Questions ?

1. Who were the Marathas? How did they manage to become the largest pan-Indian power before the British took over?
2. What were some features of their governance?
3. What impact did the Maratha Empire leave in Indian history?

As we move through the chapter you will find some sections called **‘LET’S EXPLORE’**, **‘THINK ABOUT IT’**, **‘LET’S REMEMBER’** which propose activities, in-text exercises, recall of concepts learnt earlier or will invite further reflection.

LET’S EXPLORE

About 34 per cent of eligible voters did not exercise their right to vote in the 2024 elections. Why do you think this is so? What are some challenges people face in exercising their rights? Design and conduct a short survey among adults in your family and neighbourhood to answer these questions. Analyse the data and write a report with suggestions on how it may be possible to ensure everyone votes.





THINK ABOUT IT

- What could be the lessons for young entrepreneurs that you can gather from the above case?
- Does the existing knowledge of the entrepreneur help in finding solutions to the problem at hand? Or do they need to seek other sources?
- Is profit the only motivation for an entrepreneur? Why or why not?
- What are the other personality traits required to be a successful entrepreneur?



LET'S REMEMBER

India is a parliamentary democracy where, at the national level, citizens choose representatives for the Lok Sabha (the lower house of the Parliament). They focus on issues affecting the entire country. In addition, voters elect representatives from their constituencies to the legislative assemblies in the state and union territories where they are registered. These members focus primarily on regional issues.



DON'T MISS OUT

T.N. Seshan became the Chief Election Commissioner in 1990. He brought in reforms to ensure free and fair elections, among them: campaigning to follow precise rules, voter IDs to eliminate proxy voting, and strict vigilance on spending by candidates. T.N. Seshan worked hard to protect the rights of voters and is often remembered as the officer who made Indian elections fairer, transparent and fearless!



Fig. 5.21. T.N. Seshan

‘Don’t miss out’ brings out intriguing or fun facts that will trigger your curiosity.

Before we move on ...

- ‘Natural resources’ are materials and substances that occur in Nature and are valuable to humans.
- There are different ways of categorising resources; renewable and non-renewable are useful categories.
- The ‘resource curse’ can be overcome through investments in the development of technology and skills.
- We need to become vigilant about the rate at which we use renewables so as not to overexploit them; judicious and wise use of non-renewables will enable stretching their use for a longer period of time.



At the end of every chapter, **‘Before we move on’** sums up some of the core ideas that the chapter tried to convey. A choice of exercises, questions or projects follow.

On the first page of every chapter, you will find a QR code leading you to resources related to the content of the chapter. Do scan it, or take an adult's help to scan it, and browse through the material.

Finally, note that the chapter "Reshaping India's Political Map" is meant to be read alongside the chapter "Cultural Currents: 13th to 17th Centuries", which will be found in Part 2 of this textbook (to appear later in 2025).

Accordingly this Part I does not have Theme C, "Our Cultural Heritage and Knowledge Traditions". It will appear in Part II.

Your teacher will be with you on this journey of exploring this textbook. We hope you will read parts of it with your parents or guardians too. Maybe you can try out some of the activities with them!

We wish you an enjoyable journey through Social Science and its rich insights into human life and society.



A note on the pronunciation of Sanskrit words

Since this textbook is in English, we use the Roman alphabet. But we will also encounter some words in Sanskrit and a few other Indian languages. The Roman alphabet cannot make their pronunciation clear without some additional marks or signs, such as dashes, dots or accents, called 'diacritical signs' or 'diacritics'. You can ignore all these signs if you wish, and you don't need to remember them. However, as we are using only a few simple signs, you will find it easy to get used to them. You will also find that they help you pronounce Sanskrit words fairly correctly. (Please note that for proper names, we have used diacritics only up to 1200 CE, not afterwards.)

Here is how they work:

- A short dash (called 'macron') over a vowel makes it long. For instance, *dāna* is pronounced 'daana'; *līlā* is pronounced 'leelaa'; *sūtra* is *sootra*.
- *śh* and *ṣh* are pronounced more or less as 'sh' in 'shall' (there is a slight difference, since they correspond to श and ष in the Devanagari script, but you can ignore it in practice). So *śhāstra* is pronounced 'shaastra'; *kṣhīra* is 'ksheera'.
- Consonants with a dot below them (*ḍ*, *ṭ* and *ṇ* mainly) are 'hard', i.e. pronounced by hitting the tongue on the palate; without a dot, they

are soft, with the tongue on the teeth. (As a rough comparison, in the preceding English word ‘teeth’, the first ‘t’ is hard, while the final ‘th’ is soft.) Examples of hard consonants: *Āryabhāṭa*, *gaṇa*, *paṭhana* (studying), *pīṭha*, *goṣṭhī* (association, assembly), *dhanāḍhya* (rich), *aṇu* (atom).

- Finally, *ṛ* is the Devanagari letter ऋ. We choose to write it as *ṛi*, although in some parts of India it is also pronounced as *ṛu*. So we write ‘Ṛig Veda’, for instance.

For those who wish to know the precise correspondence between the Devanagari alphabet and the Roman script in our system, the tables of short and long vowels are as follows:

Devanagari	Roman script
अ	<i>a</i>
इ	<i>i</i>
उ	<i>u</i>
ऋ	<i>ṛi</i>
ए	<i>e</i>
ओ	<i>o</i>
Devanagari	Roman script
आ	<i>ā</i>
ई	<i>ī</i>
ऊ	<i>ū</i>
ऋ	<i>ṛī</i>
ऐ	<i>ai</i>
औ	<i>au</i>

And the table of consonants:

Guttural	क	ka	ख	kha	ग	ga	घ	gha	ङ	ṅa	ह	ha
Palatal	च	cha	छ	chha	ज	ja	झ	jha	ञ	ña	य	ya
Cerebral	ट	ṭa	ठ	ṭha	ड	ḍa	ढ	ḍha	ण	ṇa	र	ra
Dental	त	ta	थ	tha	द	da	ध	dha	न	na	ल	la
Labial	प	pa	फ	pha	ब	ba	भ	bha	म	ma	व	va
Sibilants	श	śha	ष	ṣha	स	sa						



CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

Part III (Articles 12 – 35)
(Subject to certain conditions, some exceptions
and reasonable restrictions)

guarantees these

Fundamental Rights

Right to Equality

- before law and equal protection of laws;
- irrespective of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth;
- of opportunity in public employment;
- by abolition of untouchability and titles.

Right to Freedom

- of expression, assembly, association, movement, residence and profession;
- of certain protections in respect of conviction for offences;
- of protection of life and personal liberty;
- of free and compulsory education for children between the age of six and fourteen years;
- of protection against arrest and detention in certain cases.

Right against Exploitation

- for prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labour;
- for prohibition of employment of children in hazardous jobs.

Right to Freedom of Religion

- freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion;
- freedom to manage religious affairs;
- freedom as to payment of taxes for promotion of any particular religion;
- freedom as to attendance at religious instruction or religious worship in educational institutions wholly maintained by the State.

Cultural and Educational Rights

- for protection of interests of minorities to conserve their language, script and culture;
- for minorities to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.

Right to Constitutional Remedies

- by issuance of directions or orders or writs by the Supreme Court and High Courts for enforcement of these Fundamental Rights.



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Constitution of India

Part IV A (Article 51 A)

Fundamental Duties

It shall be the duty of every citizen of India —

- (a) to abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem;
- (b) to cherish and follow the noble ideals which inspired our national struggle for freedom;
- (c) to uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India;
- (d) to defend the country and render national service when called upon to do so;
- (e) to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities; to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women;
- (f) to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture;
- (g) to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers, wildlife and to have compassion for living creatures;
- (h) to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform;
- (i) to safeguard public property and to abjure violence;
- (j) to strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievement;
- *(k) who is a parent or guardian, to provide opportunities for education to his child or, as the case may be, ward between the age of six and fourteen years.

Note: The Article 51A containing Fundamental Duties was inserted by the Constitution (42nd Amendment) Act, 1976 (with effect from 3 January 1977).

*(k) was inserted by the Constitution (86th Amendment) Act, 2002 (with effect from 1 April 2010).



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THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

PREAMBLE

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a **¹[SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC]** and to secure to all its citizens :

JUSTICE, social, economic and political;

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all

FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the **²[unity and integrity of the Nation]**;

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949 do **HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.**

1. Subs. by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, Sec.2, for "Sovereign Democratic Republic" (w.e.f. 3.1.1977)
2. Subs. by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, Sec.2, for "Unity of the Nation" (w.e.f. 3.1.1977)



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Vasudhaiva Kuṭumbakam:
The whole world is one family