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Knowledge Traditions and Practices of India

Part I

TEXTBOOK FOR CLASS XI



11151

विद्यया ऽ मृतमश्नुते



एन सी ई आर टी
NCERT

**राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान और प्रशिक्षण परिषद्
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FOREWORD

India is a culturally rich country and known for its civilisation and cultural diversity all over the world. This diversity is reflected in the philosophies, customs, literatures, art forms, crafts and health related practices all over India. In India, people's beliefs, ways of life and their understanding of social relationships are quite distinct from one another. Yet they all have equal rights to coexist and flourish, and the education system is expected to respond to the cultural pluralism inherent in our society.

The *National Curriculum Framework-2005* brought out by the NCERT emphasises upon strengthening of our cultural heritage and national identity. It clearly states that the curriculum should enable the younger generation to reinterpret and reevaluate the past with reference to new priorities and emerging outlooks of a changing societal context. Understanding human evolution should make it clear that the existence of distinctness in our country is a tribute to the special spirit of our country, which allowed it to flourish. The cultural diversity of this land should continue to be treasured as our special attribute.

In consonance with this perspective of NCF-2005, the NCERT has provided ample space to cultural and knowledge practices of our country in an integrated manner across textbooks of different subject areas and classes. However, while reviewing its textbooks in 2017-18 as per the suggestions received from the teachers through online mode, we at NCERT, felt that there is a huge expectation of stakeholders from the NCERT for providing more and more space to the Indian culture and practices for students at the higher stages of school education. This expectation led NCERT to explore a new subject area for Knowledge, Traditions and Practices of India for developing its curricular material. I must acknowledge the vision and continuous guidance of our then Hon'ble Human Resource Development Minister and President, NCERT, Shri Prakash Javadekar, because of him, NCERT could develop this learner-friendly material based on scientific evidences.

It is necessary to mention here, this subject has already been introduced by the Central Board of Secondary Education in 2012 at the Higher Secondary Stage as an elective subject. To avoid any confusion among students regarding the very title of the subject, NCERT has initiated the process of development of textbooks for Higher Secondary Stage with the title 'Knowledge, Traditions and Practices of India'.

This textbook for Class XI contains nine chapters on nine different knowledge traditions and practices — Literature, Crafts, Mathematics, Metallurgy, Ayurveda, Yoga, Philosophy, Astronomy and Performing Arts with a brief introduction of all of these aspects.

The textbook has been developed keeping all the five guiding principles of the NCF-2005 in view. It provides space for students to share their experiences, critical thinking, reflection and decision-making. It has inbuilt evaluation exercises and it presents content in a manner which creates curiosity and interest among children and encourage understanding within their own context, rather than focusing on rote methods.

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This textbook is a result of team work of the faculty members of the NCERT, who have worked very hard to use authentic sources for the writing of this textbook under the able guidance of the Review Committee set up to review the textbooks developed by the NCERT. This textbook has also gone through a massive review by the experts in the specific knowledge areas from various other institutions and took the present shape. I acknowledge the support of all who have contributed towards the development of this textbook.

NCERT would welcome suggestions from students, teachers and parents, which will help us to further improve the quality of the material in subsequent editions.

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HRUSHIKESH SENAPATY
Director
National Council of Educational
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AN INTRODUCTION TO KNOWLEDGE TRADITIONS AND PRACTICES OF INDIA

India has a rich variegated history and an extraordinarily complex cultural diversity. If we look closely at our multiple cultures spread across the different regions of the country, we feel proud of the rich repository of our ancient systems of knowledge and traditions in different and diverse fields. This adds to our rich cultural heritage that has translated into practices for survival, sustenance and for leading a healthy and purposeful life. The knowledge and traditions have been handed down to us mainly in the form of oral traditions, textual materials, inscriptions, numismatics, tangible and intangible forms of art and architecture.

Ancient systems of knowledge in India, basically consist of understanding the mysteries of the universe, human interactions with environment, philosophy of life, importance of conservation and preservation of environment, development of art and aesthetic sensitivities and inculcation of just and humane qualities among all. The glimpses of our past have been woven in fields like — philosophy, grammar, literature, economy, agriculture, polity, medicine, yoga, astronomy, astrology, life-sciences, arts and crafts, architecture, metallurgy, mining, gemology, shipbuilding, trade, commerce and many other fields.

In order to provide scope to young learners to reflect upon the rich cultural past of our country, and to link with present cultural practices, a 2-year course on Knowledge, Traditions and Practices has been created. The course is presented in two parts. This textbook is the first part of the course, which acquaints the young learners with the contribution made by India to the knowledge system of the entire world creating landmarks in the area of Mathematics, Astronomy, Metallurgy, Philosophy, Ayurveda, Arts, Yoga, and Language Education. The textbook part II for Class XII students will elaborate more upon arts and crafts of India, language and grammar and will also focus on India's contributions in fields like agriculture, architecture, dance, education system and practices, ethics, martial arts and traditions, technologies, society, state and polity, and commerce. These textbooks will be helpful in developing pride and sense of appreciation for India's culture and heritage, while getting acquainted with the indigenous knowledge.

A brief summary of various chapters covered in this textbook is given here to summarise how various knowledge, traditions and practices evolved in India and how they are being passed from generation to generation.

Language is one of the most beautiful and intriguing phenomenon in the world. Languages represent multitude of people and their lived experiences. This diversity is an outcome of many factors that shape life on the subcontinent. Its territorial space is marked by mountains, river basins, coastlines, dense forests and deserts. This wide topographical range harbours a variety of environmental conditions which influence the language and cultures of people living in these regions. Thus, India houses maximum number of written and orally alive languages in the world. It is home to five major language families. These language families are: Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Austro-Asiatic, Tibeto-Burmese and Semito-Hamitic. Sanskrit language belongs to Indo-European