

BOOK REVIEW

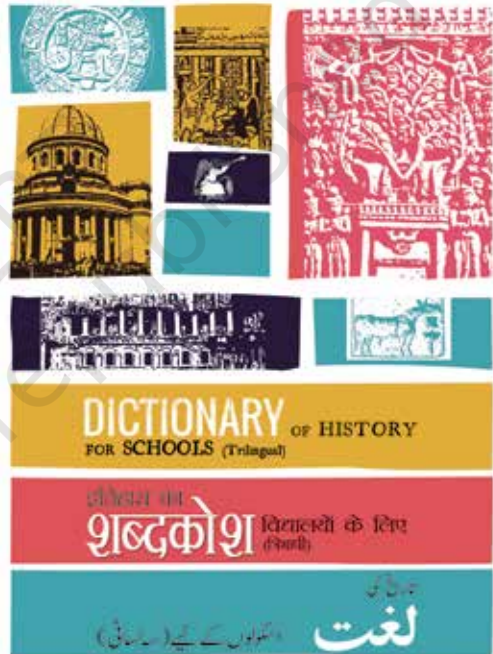
Dictionary of History for Schools (Trilingual)

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- Title:** *Dictionary of History for Schools (Trilingual)*
- Editor:** S. Perwaiz Ahmad and Rekha Agarwal (Hindi)
- Publication:** NCERT
- Price:** ₹135
- No. of pages:** 176

History, as a component of social science till the secondary stage and as an elective subject at the higher secondary stage, requires appropriate pedagogical support for effective teaching-learning process. The subject can be better appreciated, and terms and concepts used in the discipline can be appropriately assimilated, understood and learnt with the help of a dictionary that will suit the level and need of students.

There are many dictionaries available in market that explain historical terms and concepts but they are quite exhaustive and specific, and are therefore, not suitable for school students. These dictionaries have been developed either on events or on different periods of Indian history.



Some of them have entries only on important personalities, whereas, some have a mixture of entries on important personalities, writings, events, places, archaeological sites, and so on. They have few entries on

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terms and concepts occurring in the study of history. Because of their exhaustive design, these dictionaries are useful primarily to students at higher levels of specialised education. For school students, these dictionaries turn out to be inappropriate, thus, creating a gap in understanding the concepts.

Dictionary of History for Schools (Trilingual), developed by NCERT, covers all periods of history in India and world (i.e., ancient, medieval, modern and contemporary), and is, principally, a supplementary reference resource book.

NCERT textbooks are available in three languages — English, Hindi and Urdu. Many students may be fluent in one or two of these languages but they may not be fluent in all three. For example, a child may be fluent in Hindi and find it difficult to understand English when it is used as a medium of instruction. *Dictionary of History for Schools (Trilingual)* explains terms and concepts in all three languages for better learning of the students.

Entries have been included in the dictionary on the basis of their pragmatic usefulness. It includes as many terms and concepts that learners of history in school would likely look for. This dictionary, therefore, provides a information on terms and concepts significant to different periods in the history of India and world at the elementary and secondary stage. Even though it is, primarily, meant for school students, the dictionary

will be useful to anyone looking for basic information on a specific term or concept that one may come across while reading.

The explanations, though brief, give adequate information for elementary and secondary stage students and teachers teaching these classes. Conflicting statements and dates have been verified.

This dictionary with 410 entries has been structured in alphabetical order, making it convenient for the readers to access it easily. The alphabetisation is letter-by-letter, not word-by-word. Where two or more entries have the same initial name, they are in alphabetical order, e.g., Civil Rights precedes Civil War. This 'encyclopedic' format or chronological approach or even periodisation would ensure efficient use of this dictionary. Some entries, such as *zamindar*, defy easy chronological placement as they span many decades and transcend historical periods.

The dictionary also has several sub-entries. These sub-entries have been put under the respective main entries to make it easier for the students and teachers to understand the larger picture, for example the entry on 'absolutism' has 'absolutist' and 'absolute rule' as sub-entries.

Non-English words that are not proper nouns or titles are in italics with exception of few words, which have been acquired in English language. For example, 'samurai' is originally a Japanese word. But it has now been

included in English, so it is not in italics. Sanskrit and Pali words are in italics. The elaborate diacritical marks required by strict Indology are also not used in the text of the dictionary.

The explanations have been drawn extensively on the opinions of other scholars. The works that have been consulted intensively are included in the bibliography section.

For easy access, the dictionary also includes an index. In order to facilitate rapid and efficient location of information, and to make this dictionary useful, extensive cross-references (e.g., See also) have been provided.

Hence, *Dictionary of History for Schools (Trilingual)* is a comprehensive source and reference book for all scholars and students of the discipline.

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