

Collegedunia NCERT Notes

NCERT Revision Notes

Chapter 5: India, That Is Bharat

These notes explain Class 6 Social Science Chapter 5 for the 2026-27 NCERT textbook. The focus is India's names, ancient sources, foreign names, geography and the phrase India, that is Bharat.

Also see for this chapter: [NCERT Solutions](#)

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1 Chapter at a Glance

Chapter 5 explains how India has been known by different names across time. It connects geography, ancient texts, inscriptions, travellers and the Constitution.



1.1 Big questions

- How do we define India as a region?
- Which ancient Indian names were used for India?
- How did foreign names like Hindu, Indoi and India develop?

1.2 Fast revision frame

- Ancient Indian names include Sapta Sindhava, Bharata and Jambudvipa.
- Foreign names often came from Sindhu or Indus.
- The Constitution uses the phrase India, that is Bharat.

Exam Tip

Use N-S-C: names, sources and continuity. This covers the whole chapter.

2 India as a Modern Nation and Ancient Region

The India we know today has defined borders, states and a known population. Earlier, boundaries shifted and people used different names for the same broad region.



2.1 Modern India

- India today is a modern nation.
- It has defined borders and states.
- It has a known population counted through official systems.

2.2 Older Indian Subcontinent

- Five hundred, two thousand or five thousand years ago, the region was not exactly the same as today.

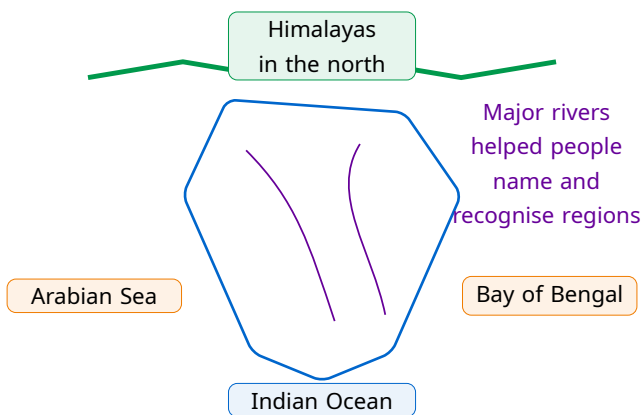
- The textbook uses Indian Subcontinent for the larger historical region.
- Names changed with time, source and language.

Core Idea

A name can preserve how people understood geography, identity and memory.

3 Natural Boundaries of the Subcontinent

The chapter opens with a physical map. It asks students to observe mountains, seas and rivers that shaped the region's identity.



3.1 Mountain and sea frame

- The Himalayas stand in the north.
- The seas and ocean surround the southern part.
- The Vishnu Purana later describes Bharat as north of the ocean and south of the snowy mountains.

3.2 River network

- The map shows rivers such as Indus, Ganga, Yamuna, Brahmaputra, Narmada, Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri.
- Rivers helped people recognise and describe regions.
- The Sindhu or Indus became especially important in naming India.

Map Link

Physical geography often gives a region its earliest shared identity.

4 Sources for the Names of India

The names of India come from several kinds of evidence. The chapter uses ancient texts, inscriptions and accounts of visitors.



4.1 Indian sources

- The Rig Veda gives Sapta Sindhava for the northwest.
- The Mahabharata uses Bharata-varsha and

Jambudvipa.

- The Vishnu Purana describes Bharata with ocean and mountain boundaries.

4.2 External sources

- Persian inscriptions use forms such as Hind, Hidu or Hindu.
- Greek writers used Indoi or Indike.
- Chinese texts use Yintu, Yindu and Tianzhu.

Writing Cue

For source-based answers, always name the text or people who used the term.

5 Sapta Sindhava in the Rig Veda

The Rig Veda is described as India's most ancient text. It gives the northwest region of the Subcontinent the name Sapta Sindhava.



5.1 Meaning of Sapta Sindhava

- Sapta means seven.
- Sindhava comes from Sindhu.
- The phrase means land of the seven rivers.

5.2 Link with Sindhu

- Sindhu refers to the Indus River.
- Sometimes Sindhu can also mean river in general.
- This word later influenced many foreign names for India.

Memory Hook

Sapta Sindhava: seven rivers around the northwest region.

6 Regions Listed in the Mahabharata

The Mahabharata lists many regions across the Subcontinent. The textbook map shows that these names cover a wide geography.

Ancient region name plus modern cue

Kashmira
modern Kashmir

Kurukshetra
parts of Haryana

Vanga
parts of Bengal

Pragjyotisha
roughly Assam

6.1 Examples of regions

- Kashmira is linked with today's Kashmir.
- Kurukshetra is linked with parts of Haryana.
- Vanga is linked with parts of Bengal.
- Pragjyotisha roughly points to Assam.

6.2 Why the list matters

- The list shows knowledge of many regions.
- It connects literature with geography.
- It helps students see that the Subcontinent was recognised through many regional identities.

Map Link

A literary list becomes historical evidence when it preserves regional names.

7 Bharatavarsha and Bharata

The Mahabharata uses Bharatavarsha for the entire Subcontinent. The word means the country of the Bharatas.



7.1 Meaning of the term

- Bharatavarsha means the country of the Bharatas.
- Bharata first appears in the Rig Veda as a Vedic group of people.
- Later literature mentions several kings named Bharata.

7.2 Why it became important

- The name expanded from people and memory to a wide region.
- A few centuries later, Bharata became widely used for the Indian Subcontinent.
- Today it remains a living name in many Indian languages.

Core Idea

Bharata is not a recent label. It has deep roots in Indian textual memory.

8 Jambudvipa and the Jamun Tree

Jambudvipa is another ancient name used for the Indian Subcontinent. It means the island of the fruit of the jamun tree.



8.1 Meaning of Jambudvipa

- Jambu refers to the jamun tree.
- Dvipa means island or continent in this context.
- The name came to mean the Indian Subcontinent.

8.2 Ashoka's inscription

- Ashoka lived around 250 BCE.
- He left many inscriptions.
- One inscription uses Jambudvipa for the whole of India of that time.

Source Link

Pair Jambudvipa with Ashoka when you revise evidence.

Name	Meaning	Source cue
Sapta Sindhava	Land of seven rivers	Rig Veda
Bharatavarsha	Country of the Bharatas	Mahabharata
Jambudvipa	Island of the jamun fruit	Mahabharata and Ashoka
Bharata	Ancient Indian name in wide use	Later literature and modern languages

9 India in Ashoka's Time

The chapter says Ashoka's use of Jambudvipa included what is today India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and parts of Afghanistan.



9.1 Historical extent

- The term described a larger region than present-day India.
- It included neighbouring areas that share connected histories.
- This shows that ancient names need historical context.

9.2 Why inscriptions matter

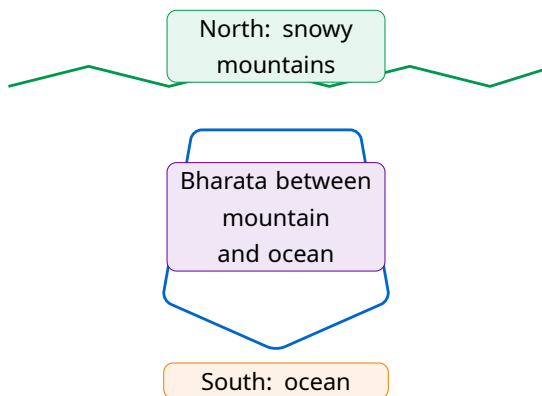
- Inscriptions are written records on stone or other durable surfaces.
- They are useful because they can be dated and located.
- Ashoka's inscriptions are important sources for early Indian history.

Avoid This

Do not assume an ancient name always matches today's political border.

10 Vishnu Purana Description of Bharata

The Vishnu Purana gives a famous description of Bharata as the country north of the ocean and south of the snowy mountains.



10.1 Textbook meaning

- The snowy mountains refer to the Himalayas.
- The ocean points to the seas around the south.
- The description uses natural boundaries rather than political borders.

10.2 Why the phrase is useful

- It is short and easy to remember.
- It shows a geographic imagination of the whole region.
- It connects Sanskrit literature with India's physical map.

Exam Cue

Snowy mountains means the Himalayas in this chapter.

11 Bharat, Bharata and Bharatam

The name Bharata remains in use even today. Different Indian languages pronounce or write it in slightly different forms.



11.1 North and south usage

- In north India, it is generally written Bharat.
- In south India, it is often Bharatam.
- The underlying name remains connected to Bharata.

11.2 Living continuity

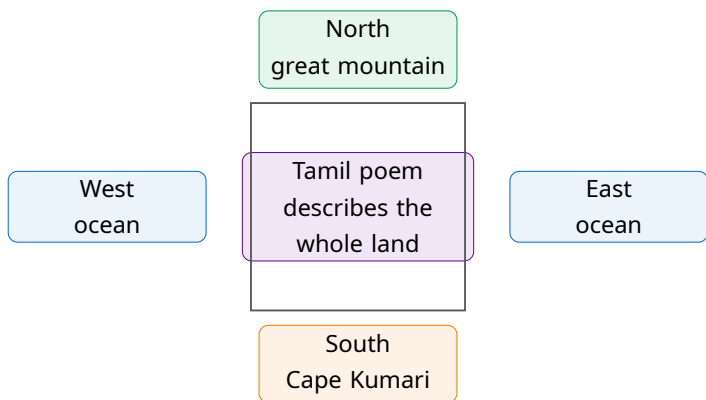
- The ancient name did not disappear.
- It continued through languages, texts and public life.
- This continuity is why the Constitution can use India and Bharat together.

Core Idea

A historical name can remain alive when people keep using it across generations.

12 Tamil Literature and the Whole Region

The chapter notes that ancient Tamil literature also described a wide geography. A poem praises a king known from Cape Kumari to the great mountain.



12.1 The Tamil example

- The poem is about 2,000 years old.
- It mentions Cape Kumari in the south.
- It mentions the great mountain in the north and oceans to the east and west.

12.2 What it proves

- Different parts of India imagined the land through similar natural markers.
- Ancient Indians knew their geography well.

- Literature can preserve regional and subcontinental memory together.

Culture Link

Tamil literature and Sanskrit literature both preserve geographic imagination.

13 India, That Is Bharat in the Constitution

The Indian Constitution begins with the phrase India, that is Bharat. The Hindi version states the same idea as Bharat arthath India.



13.1 Why this matters

- The Constitution is the basic legal document of the nation.
- It came into force in 1950.
- The phrase joins the modern name India with the ancient name Bharat.

13.2 Revision point

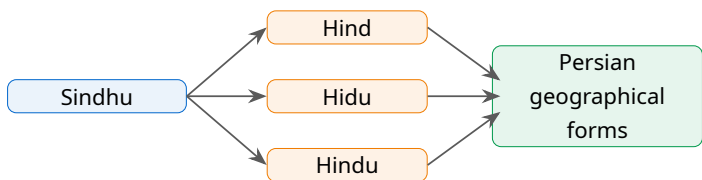
- Students should connect this phrase with continuity.
- It is not a separate name debate in this chapter.
- It shows how historical memory enters modern public life.

Answer Cue

Use the Constitution example to link ancient

14 Persian Names: Hind, Hidu and Hindu

The first foreigners to mention India in the chapter are the Persians. Their forms of the name came from Sindhu.



14.1 How the Persian form developed

- A Persian emperor gained control of the Indus region in the 6th century BCE.
- The Persians adapted Sindhu into Hind, Hidu or Hindu.
- The term was geographical in ancient Persian.

14.2 Important caution

- In this context, Hindu does not refer to the Hindu religion.
- It refers to the region linked with Sindhu.

- This distinction is often tested in true or false questions.

Avoid This

In ancient Persian records here, Hindu is a geographical term, not a religious label.

15 Greek Names: Indoi and Indike

Greek names for India were based on Persian forms. The Greeks dropped the initial h because their language did not have that sound in the same way.



15.1 From Hindu to Indoi

- Persian Hindu influenced Greek Indoi and Indike.
- The first sound h was dropped.
- These forms later helped create the Latin and English forms.

15.2 Why language changes names

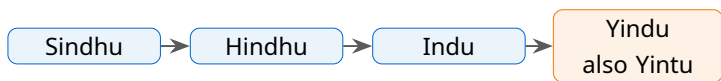
- Languages adapt unfamiliar sounds.
- Foreign travellers record what they hear in their own writing system.
- This is why one place can have many related names.

Memory Hook

Sindhu to Hindu to Indoi is the main sound chain.

16 Chinese Names: Yintu, Yindu and Tianzhu

Ancient Chinese texts also refer to India. Some names, such as Yintu and Yindu, are linked to the Sindhu name family.



Tianzhu: another Sindhu-derived Chinese term, also understood as heavenly master

16.1 Yintu and Yindu

- The chapter traces Sindhu to Hindhu, then Indu, then Yindu.
- These forms show another language route from Sindhu.
- They record contact between China and India.

16.2 Tianzhu and respect

- Tianzhu was another Chinese word for India.
- It could be understood as heavenly master.
- The chapter links this respect with India as the land of the Buddha.

Culture Link

Names can show respect, travel and cultural exchange.

Language or people	Name form	Main route
Persian	Hind, Hidu, Hindu	Sindhu adapted in Persian
Greek	Indoi, Indike	Hindu with initial h dropped
Chinese	Yintu and Yindu	Sindhu-derived route
Chinese	Tianzhu	Also Sindhu-derived, and read as heavenly master
English and French	India, Inde	Later European forms

17 Xuanzang and Chinese Travel to India

The chapter highlights Xuanzang, a Chinese scholar who travelled to India in the 7th century CE.



17.1 What Xuanzang did

- He visited many parts of India.
- He met scholars and collected Buddhist texts.
- He returned to China after 17 years.

17.2 Why his journey matters

- He translated manuscripts from Sanskrit into Chinese.
- His journey shows India-China intellectual contact.
- Several other Chinese scholars also visited India over the centuries.

Revision Cue

Remember Xuanzang with Buddhist texts and Sanskrit to Chinese translation.

18 Hindustan and Later Usage

The term Hindustan is familiar today, but the chapter says it first appeared in a Persian inscription about 1,800 years ago.



18.1 Early use

- Hindustan was first used in a Persian inscription.
- The date is about 1,800 years ago.
- It later became a common term used by many invaders of India.

18.2 Correcting a common error

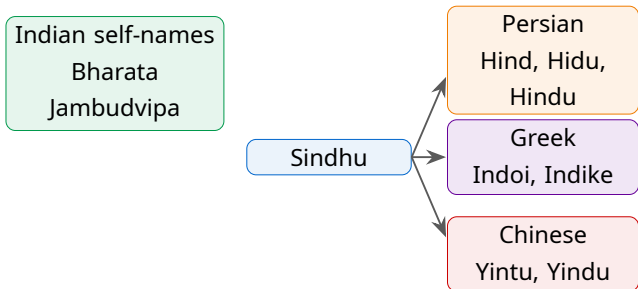
- The textbook true or false section says it did not first appear in a Greek inscription.
- It is linked with Persian usage.
- It described the Indian Subcontinent in later historical contexts.

Avoid This

Do not write that Hindustan first appeared in a Greek inscription.

19 Name Chains to Remember

This chapter becomes easy when students group names by source. The same root, Sindhu, appears behind several foreign names.



19.1 Indian name chain

- Sapta Sindhava is linked with the northwest and seven rivers.
- Bharatavarsha and Bharata are linked with Indian texts.
- Jambudvipa is linked with the jamun tree and Ashoka's inscription.

19.2 Foreign name chain

- Persian: Hind, Hidu or Hindu.
- Greek: Indoi or Indike.

- Chinese: Yintu, Yindu and Tianzhu.
- English and French: India and Inde.

Memory Hook

Indian names show self-description. Foreign names often show the Sindhu route.

20 True or False Trap Points

The textbook exercises include several true or false statements. The notes below turn them into quick checks.



20.1 Likely true points

- The Vishnu Purana describes the whole Subcontinent with ocean and snowy mountains.
- In Ashoka's time, Jambudvipa included India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and parts of Afghanistan.
- The Mahabharata lists regions such as Kashmir, Kutch and Kerala.

20.2 Likely false points

- The Rig Veda does not describe the entire geography of India.
- Hindustan did not first appear in a Greek inscription.
- In ancient Persian, Hindu did not refer to the Hindu religion.
- Bharata was not given by foreign travellers.

Answer Cue

For true or false, correct the wrong word, not only the final answer.

Statement	Likely answer	Correction cue
Rig Veda describes the entire geography of India	False	It names the northwest region as Sapta Sindhava
Vishnu Purana describes the Subcontinent	True	North of ocean, south of snowy mountains
Hindustan first appeared in Greek inscription	False	Persian inscription

Ancient Persian Hindu means Hindu religion	False	Geographical term in this context
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21 Why People Travelled to Ancient India

The last exercise asks why people travelled to India from different parts of the world. Students should give several motivations.



21.1 Main motivations

- Trade in goods and resources.
- Pilgrimage and religious learning.
- Scholarship and study.
- Political or military campaigns.
- Curiosity about a famous civilisation.

21.2 How to write the answer

- Start with India as a known cultural and economic region.
- Give four or five motivations.
- Add examples such as Chinese Buddhist scholars or Persian contact with the Indus region.

Answer Link

Travel history is not only about invasion. It also includes learning, trade and pilgrimage.

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22 Quick Reference Summary

The final section collects the chapter's must-know names, meanings and source links for one-sitting revision.



22.1 Must-know Indian names

- Sapta Sindhava means land of seven rivers.
- Bharatavarsha means the country of the Bharatas.
- Jambudvipa means island of the jamun fruit.
- Bharata remains in use as Bharat and Bharatam.

22.2 Must-know foreign names

- Persian names include Hind, Hidu and Hindu.

- Greek names include Indoi and Indike.
- Chinese names include Yintu, Yindu and Tianzhu.
- Hindustan is linked with Persian usage.

Last-Minute Cue

Connect every name to its source, meaning and historical period.

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Same chapter, other resources:

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- [NCERT Book PDF](#)
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Continue learning:

- [Ch 4: Timeline and Sources of History](#)
- [Ch 6: The Beginnings of Indian Civilisation](#)
- [Class 6 Social Science - All Chapters](#)