

- India, That Is Bharat
- Introduction to India Names
- How India Got Its Name
- Adoption of Bharata
- How Foreigners Named India
- Key Dates in Indian Naming History
- Keywords
- Solved Examples
- Practice Set
- Answer Key
- Quick Reference
- Glossary

India, That Is Bharat

India's history is marked by its evolving names and boundaries, reflecting its rich cultural and historical heritage. The various names used for about its past and the perceptions of different peoples and cultures.

Introduction to India Names

India has been known by different names throughout history, derived from ancient texts, inscriptions, and accounts of travellers. These names geography, culture, and political history of the region.

Exam Question

Q: Why is the study of different names of India important in understanding its history?

A: The different names of India reflect its cultural diversity, historical changes, and the perspectives of various peoples, helping us understand identity.

How India Got Its Name

The names for India have evolved over the years, originating from ancient scriptures and foreign influences.

Sapta Sindhava: The Land of Seven Rivers

The earliest name for India is 'Sapta Sindhava', mentioned in the Rig Veda, referring to the northwest region as the 'land of seven rivers'. The term comes from 'Sindhu', the Indus River, a major river in the region.

Regional Names in Ancient Texts

The Mahabharata, a famous Indian epic, mentions various regions such as Kashmir (modern-day Kashmir), Kurukshetra (modern-day Haryana), Bengal, Pragjyotisha (modern-day Assam), Kaccha (modern-day Kutch), and Kerala (modern-day Kerala). It also refers to the entire subcontinent.

'Bharatavarsha' and 'Jambudvipa'.

Exam Question

Q: What does the term 'Sapta Sindhava' signify?

A: 'Sapta Sindhava' means the land of seven rivers, referring to the northwest region of India as mentioned in the Rig Veda.

Adoption of Bharata

'Bharata' became the widely accepted name for India, appearing in ancient texts like the Vishnu Purana. It is still used today as 'Bharat' in North India and 'Bharata' in South India. Other definitions also existed, such as a Tamil poem describing India's geography from Cape Kumari in the south to the Himalayas in the north.

Exam Question

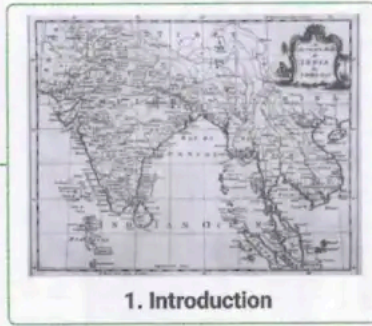
Q: How is the name 'Bharata' significant in Indian history?

A: 'Bharata' refers to a group of Vedic people and became the accepted name for India, symbolizing its cultural and historical identity.

How Foreigners Named India

The Persians were the first foreigners to mention India, calling it 'Hind', 'Hindu', or 'Hindu' around the 6th century BCE, based on the Indus River. The Chinese used terms like 'Yintu', 'Yindu', and 'Tianzhu', the latter reflecting reverence for India as the land of 'Hindustan' appeared in Persian inscriptions about 1,800 years ago and became a common name for the Indian subcontinent.

India, also known as Bharat, is a land with a rich cultural and historical legacy. Quote by Sri Aurobindo: "India's spiritual and cultural unity is deep-rooted."



4. Regional Names

- Kashmira: C to modern-c
- Kurukshetra modern-day
- Vanga: Pert modern-day
- Pragjyotisha modern-day
- Kaccha: Co modern-day
- Kerala: Reta ancient nan

Sapta Sindhava: The "land of seven rivers," mentioned in the Rig Veda, signifying the geographical and cultural importance of river systems.

Bhāratavarṣha: The land of the Bharata people and is used in ancient texts like the Mahabharata.

Jambudvīpa: "Island of the Jambul tree," this name was used by Emperor Ashoka.

2. Ancient Names for India



Exam Question

Q: What are some of the names given to India by foreign cultures?
 A: Persians called it 'Hind', Greeks called it 'Indoi', and Chinese used 'Yintu' or 'Tianzhu'. The term 'Hindustan' was also used in Persian inscriptions.

Key Dates in Indian Naming History

Time Period / Year	Event / Change	Importance
6th century BCE	Persian military campaign mentioning India	First foreign records referring to India as 'Hind'
7th century CE	Chinese scholar Xuanzang travels to India	Chinese terms for India like 'Yindu' and 'Tianzhu' emerge
Around 1,800 years ago	First use of 'Hindustan' in Persian inscriptions	'Hindustan' becomes a common name for the Indian s

Exam Question

Q: When was the term 'Hindustan' first used?
 A: The term 'Hindustan' was first used about 1,800 years ago in Persian inscriptions.

Keywords

- **Constitution:** A document that spells out the basic principles and laws of a nation.
- **Inhabitants:** People who live in a particular place.
- **Subcontinent:** A large landmass that is part of a continent and usually consists of a number of countries.

Solved Examples

Example 1: Explain the significance of the name 'Bharatavarsha'.

Answer: 'Bharatavarsha' means the country of the Bharatas, a group of Vedic people. It was one of the earliest names used to describe the region, highlighting the cultural and historical identity of the region.

Example 2: Describe how the name 'Hindustan' came into use.

Answer: The term 'Hindustan' originated from Persian inscriptions about 1,800 years ago. It was derived from 'Hind', the Persian name for India, and became a common name for the Indian subcontinent.

Practice Set

Easy

- What is the meaning of 'Sapta Sindhava'?
- Name two regions mentioned in the Mahabharata.

Moderate

- Explain the significance of the name 'Jambudvipa'.
- How did the Greeks refer to India and why?

Challenging

- Discuss the evolution of the name 'Bharat' and its importance in Indian history.
- Analyze the impact of foreign names on the perception of India in ancient times.

Answer Key

- **Easy 1:** 'Sapta Sindhava' means the land of seven rivers.
- **Easy 2:** Kashmir and Kurukshetra are two regions mentioned in the Mahabharata.
- **Moderate 1:** 'Jambudvipa' means the island of the Jamun tree and was used to describe the Indian subcontinent.
- **Moderate 2:** The Greeks called India 'Indoi' or 'Indike', dropping the initial 'h' from the Persian 'Hind'.
- **Challenging 1:** 'Bharat' originated from the name of a Vedic tribe and became the accepted name for India, symbolizing its cultural unity.
- **Challenging 2:** Foreign names like 'Hind', 'Indoi', and 'Tianzhu' influenced how India was viewed internationally, highlighting its geographical significance.

Quick Reference

- **Sapta Sindhava:** Land of seven rivers, earliest name from Rig Veda.
- **Bharatavarsha:** Country of the Bharatas, ancient name for India.

- **Jambudvipa:** Island of the Jamun tree, used during Emperor Ashoka's reign.
- **Hindustan:** Persian-origin name for India, used about 1,800 years ago.

Glossary

Rig Veda

One of the oldest sacred texts of India, containing hymns and references to early Indian geography.

Mahabharata

An ancient Indian epic that mentions various regions and names of India.

Persians

People from ancient Persia who were among the first foreigners to refer to India in their records.

Vishnu Purana

An ancient Indian text that mentions the name 'Bharata' for India.

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