

Chapter-1

INDIA, G20 AND THE WORLD

1.1 What is India and what is her identity? Is she as elusive to find as the insides of a seed? A mere country cannot assume the bewitching charms that hang on her slender wrists. So, how to encounter the real India?

1.2 India is the name given to the vast peninsula which the continent of Asia throws out to the south of the magnificent mountain ranges that stretch in a sword like curve across the southern border of Tibet. Shaped like an irregular quadrilateral, this large expanse of territory we call India, deserves the name of a subcontinent. Ancient Geographers referred to India as being "constituted with a four-fold conformation" (chatuh samasthana samsthitam), "on its South and West and East is the Great Ocean, the Himavat range stretches along its north like the string of a bow".

1.3 The name Himavat in the above passage refers not only to the snow-capped ranges of the Himalayas but also to their less elevated offshoots - the Patkai, Lushai and Chittagong Hills in the east, and the Sulaiman and Kirthar ranges in the west. These go down to the Sea and separate India from the wooded valley of Irrawady, on the one hand, and the hilly tableland of Iran, on the other. The Himalayas standing tall in breathtaking splendour are radiant in myth and mystery. These, the youngest and tallest mountain ranges, feed the Ganga with never-ending streams of snow. The Himalayas are home to the people of Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.

1.4 Indians love these peaks because they are a part of every Indian's life. Indians revere the mountains, as they would, the father. Even today, when urban India is racing against time, in the caves of the snow-clad peaks, live hermits - seeking the divine. Not a surprise when you consider that even this century has seen some great philosophers like Ramana Maharishi, Swami Vivekananda, Ramakrishna Paramhansa and J. Krishnamurti.



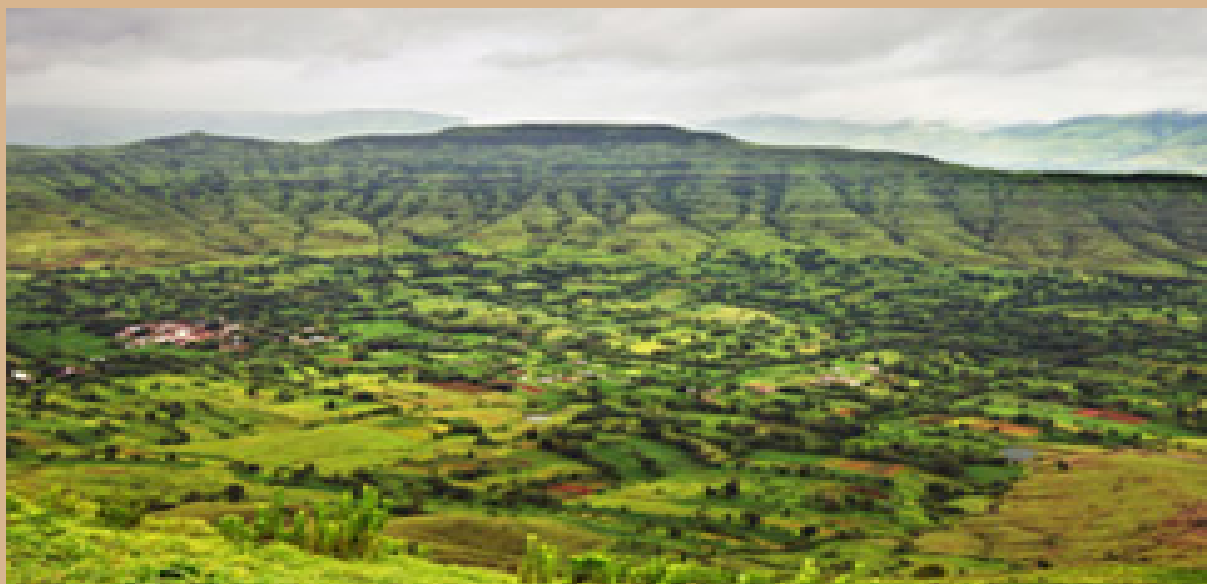
1.5 Located in the Southern part of Asia, India lies between $8^{\circ}4'$ and $37^{\circ}6'$ N Latitude and $68^{\circ}7'$ and $97^{\circ}25'$ E Longitude. This seventh largest country in the world spreads over an area of 3,166,414 sq. km., including Lakshadweep Island in the Arabian Sea and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal. India is bounded by the Arabian Sea on its west and south west and the Bay of Bengal on its east and south east and the Himalayan Mountain ranges borders the country on its north. India shares its territorial border with Afghanistan, Pakistan, China, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh.

India is blessed with diverse topography—from mountains to plains, to plateaus, deserts, coasts and islands. The Tropic of Cancer divides the country into two equal parts in the Northern and Southern part, and the Vindhya Mountains cut right across the country, from West to East.

The Himalayas, which forms the Northern boundary of the country, consist of three parallel series of mountain range: the Himadri, Himachal and Shivaliks.



India is also fortunate in possessing a wide stretch of fertile lands, made up of the alluvial soil brought down in the form of fine silt by the mighty rivers. Lying south of the Himalayas, these Great North Indian Plains consist of the Indus basin, Ganga-Brahmaputra basin, and the tributaries of these mighty river systems.



1.6 To the south of the Great Plains of Northern India lies the Great Plateau of Peninsular India, which is divided into three parts, namely the Malwa Plateau, the Chota Nagpur Plateau and the Deccan Plateau. The Malwa plateau bounded by the Aravalli hills and the Vindhya form the northern half of this peninsula. The valley of the Narmada River forms the Southern boundary of this plateau. Chota Nagpur Plateau lies in the Eastern part of the peninsular and is the richest minerals producing region of India. The Deccan Plateau extends from the Satpura hills in the north to Kanyakumari in South.

Towards the west of the Deccan Plateau lie the Western Ghats that comprise of the Sahyadri, the Nilgiri, the Annamalai and the Cardamom Hills. On the eastern side, this plateau merges

into a layer of discontinuous low hills known as the Mahendra Giri hills, which comprise of the Eastern Ghats.

1.7 Narrow coastal plains along the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal flank the Deccan Plateau on its eastern and western sides, respectively. The Western coastal plains lying between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea, further split into the Northern Konkan Coast and the Southern Malabar Coast. The Eastern coastal plains, on the other hand lie between the Eastern Ghats and the Bay of Bengal and like the Western plains are divided into two parts - the Coromandel Coast as the Southern part and the Northern Circars as the Northern part.

Towards the Western half of India lies a vast stretch of land that is divided by the Aravalli Mountains into two separate units. The area to the west of the Aravalli comprises of the Thar Desert - made up of sand and interrupted by rocky hills and waterless valleys. This arid land extends deep into Pakistan. The state of Gujarat lies to the east of this range and is one of the most prosperous regions in India.

1.8 Geographical India: India is a vast country in the Southern portion of Asia which is bound by Indian Ocean on its south, Arabian Sea on its west and Bay of Bengal on its east and borders Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, China and Bangladesh on its north, northwest, northeast and east. Physical India maps can serve as effective tools for understanding the geophysical and topological features of the Indian sub-continent. An India outline map clearly defines the geopolitical outline of the country and India political map can help better understand the political boundaries and sub-divisions of the country for all practical purposes. In the physical map of India, earthquake prone regions (high risk) can be located as Himalayan region, parts of North Indian plains and parts of Gujarat. India has also witnessed some of the devastating earthquakes in these regions. India is an immense country with more than a billion population. India road map is an excellent tool for understanding the Indian transportation network, which includes an immense road network, covering almost whole of the sub-continent. However, Indian rail network and air travel network have emerged as virtual engines of economic growth in the modern times even while falling behind the road network in terms of geographical reach.

1.9 Culture of India : India, known for unity in diversity, offers an awesome, creative burst of culture - a potpourri of religions, races and languages. The roots of Indian culture and civilization can be traced back to more than 5,000 years ago with an unbroken continuity of traditions, customs and world-renowned schools of philosophy. Amongst the world's oldest, richest and most diverse cultures, India represents an amazing confluence of different creeds, religions, faiths and belief systems, further divided among castes, sects and sub-sects.

For times immemorial, India has remained a meeting ground between the East and the West, a treasure house of knowledge and wisdom. The Vedic culture and Vedic way of life have struck deep roots in India and are followed by people even today. Apart from the Vedas, other important scriptures composed during Vedic times include the Upanishadas (enlightening commentaries on the Vedas), the shrutis and the smritis (storehouses of heard and remembered erudition and learning).

India believes in Sarva dharma samabhava, which means respect for all belief systems. This has allowed not just tolerance towards religions and beliefs, but the freedom to propound one's ideas and philosophies.

1.10 Religion: In India, religion is not simply a belief system but a journey of self exploration. All the major religions of the world like Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism, Islam and Christianity including their sects, are found and practised in India with complete freedom.

Religions have co-existed and evolved together for many centuries in the country and are very central to the lives of the people, who have a remarkable openness to even foreign religions. Judaism was one of the first foreign religions to arrive in India about 2500 years ago.

1.11 Festivals: The tradition of celebrating festivals goes back to the Vedic period. The scriptures and works of literature of this era are replete with references to festivals. These were the celebrations in honour of gods, rivers, trees, mountains, and seasons like spring, and monsoon. These were the times for prayers and meditation, and also for spectacle and procession - occasions to express pure joy with performances comprising music, dance and drama, and conducting fairs.

1.12 The birthplace of great epics – **Mahabharata and Ramayana** – India has a veritable wealth of literature including the fascinating stories of the **Panchtantra; Raghuvamsha, Shakuntala, Meghaduuta, written by Kālidāsa; Pāṇini's Ashtadhyayi** which standardised the grammar and phonetics of Classical Sanskrit; **Chanakya's Arthashastra** (a treatise on statecraft, economic policy and military strategy) and **Vatsyayana's magnum opus on the art of love-making - Kamasutra.; Geeta Govinda by Jayadeva and the famous Akbar-Birbal stories.**

Languages Throughout history, Indian languages and literature have exercised a great deal of influence on other great civilizations and intellectual development of the world at large. To know the real India, languages of different regions must be acquainted with, which can afford a great deal of information on India culture, traditions, history and folklore.

1.13 Although Hindi and English are the major languages in India, there are 22 official languages and countless other dialects. Apart from producing numerous masterpieces of literature, India has taken rapid strides for promoting all branches of education. Right from ancient times, India has enjoyed the unquestioned reputation of being the centre of excellence in education.

In the past, the Takshila University flourished in the northwest and Nalanda University in the east of India. The tradition of quality education is carried forward by modern Indian universities such as Delhi University (DU), Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) Jamia Millia University, Allahabad University, Visva-Bharati University and Vanasthali Vidya Peeth, to name a few.

1.14 Arts (Handicrafts, Paintings, Music, Dances, Cuisine, Films): The birthplace of great epics – **Mahabharata and Ramayana** – India has a veritable wealth of literature including the fascinating stories of the **Panchtantra; Raghuvamsha, Shakuntala, Meghaduuta, written by Kālidāsa; Pāṇini's Ashtadhyayi** which standardised the grammar and phonetics of Classical Sanskrit; **Chanakya's Arthashastra** (a treatise on statecraft, economic policy and military strategy) and **Vatsyayana's magnum opus on the art of love-making - Kamasutra.; Geeta Govinda by Jayadeva and the famous Akbar-Birbal stories.** Lord Krishna love for Radha has been the inspiration for miniature painters of the Kangra or

Pahari school of Painting, as also for the elaborate style of painting embellished with gold, known as the Tanjore styles from South India.

1.15 India's diplomatic and strategic engagement with the Western countries has gone through radical changes in recent times. India maintains solid bilateral relations with the **United States, United Kingdom, Germany and Russia**. India's claim for a permanent seat in the **UN Security Council**, as well as more responsibility in institutions such as the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** and the **World Bank** is much dependent on good relation with the developed West.

List of Tables in this Chapter		
Sr. No.	No. of Table	Name of Table
1	1.1	India, G20 and The World
2	1.2	Human Development Index and its Components for G20 Countries
3	1.3	Export (Goods) Growth and Share in World Exports : India and G-20 Countries

Source & Reference:-

- A) International Trade Statistics 2015, World Trade Organization (2002-2014- data)
- B) International Financial Statistics, IMF (2010-2014-data)
- C) European Commission Dte General for Trade(For EU Exports Data) & European Central Bank (for Euro -Dollar Conversion)
- D) Human Development Report 2015, UNDP