

# India, That Is Bharat

Class 6 — Social Science (History) — Chapter 5

NCERT Comprehensive Notes 2025-26

## 01 Chapter Overview

Chapter 5 of CBSE Class 6 Social Science (Exploring Society: India and Beyond — Tapestry of the Past) explores how India got its many names over thousands of years. The chapter traces the origins of names like **Sapta Sindhava**, **Bhāratavarṣha**, **Jambudvīpa**, and **Bhārata** from ancient Indian texts, and how foreigners — Persians, Greeks, Chinese, and Arabs — gave India names derived from **Sindhu** (the Indus River). The chapter begins with a famous quote by **Sri Aurobindo** on India's spiritual and cultural unity and ends with the Indian Constitution's opening phrase: "*India, that is Bharat.*"

### ★ USP Key Points

- ★ The **Ṛig Veda**, India's most ancient text (several thousand years old), names the northwest region '**Sapta Sindhava**' — the land of 7 rivers.
- ★ The **Mahābhārata** (written from a few centuries BCE onward) uses the terms '**Bhāratavarṣha**' and '**Jambudvīpa**' for the entire Subcontinent.
- ★ Emperor **Ashoka (c. 250 BCE)** used the name '**Jambudvīpa**' in his inscriptions to describe all of India, including today's Bangladesh, Pakistan, and parts of Afghanistan.
- ★ The **Viṣṇu Purāṇa** defined Bhārata as the land north of the ocean and south of the snowy mountains (Himalayas).
- ★ Persians called India '**Hind**', '**Hidu**', or '**Hindu**' in the **6th century BCE** — all derived from 'Sindhu'.
- ★ The Chinese used names like '**Yintu**', '**Yindu**', and '**Tianzhu**' (meaning 'heavenly master') for India.
- ★ The term '**Hindustān**' was first used in a Persian inscription about **1,800 years ago**.

## 02 How Indians Named India

### The Indian Subcontinent — An Ancient Land

Today, India is a modern nation with defined borders, defined states, and a known population. However, the Indian Subcontinent looked very different 500, 2,000, or even 5,000 years ago. Over the centuries, this region has had many different names and shifting boundaries. We learn about India's past from ancient texts, accounts of travellers and pilgrims, and inscriptions.

**Natural Boundaries of the Subcontinent:** The Indian Subcontinent is bounded by the **Himalayas** in the north, the **Arabian Sea** in the west, the **Bay of Bengal** in the east, and the **Indian Ocean** in the south. The **Hindu Kush** mountains lie in the northwest.

### Sapta Sindhava — The Land of Seven Rivers

The **Ṛig Veda** is India's most ancient text; it is several thousand years old. The Ṛig Veda gives the northwest region of the Subcontinent the name '**Sapta Sindhava**', meaning the '**land of the seven rivers**'. The word 'Sindhava' comes from '**Sindhu**', which refers to the Indus River, or at times to a river in general.

### Sindhu (सिन्धु)

The Sanskrit name for the Indus River. It also means 'river' or 'ocean' in general. This word became the root of many names for India used by foreigners.

## Names from the Mahābhārata

The Mahābhārata, one of India's most famous texts, lists many regions across the Subcontinent. These include **Kāshmīra** (today's Kashmir), **Kurukṣetra** (parts of Haryana), **Vanga** (parts of Bengal), **Prāgjyotiṣha** (roughly today's Assam), **Kaccha** (today's Kutch), **Kerala** (today's Kerala), and many more. These regional names show that ancient Indians had a detailed knowledge of the geography of the entire Subcontinent.

ANCIENT NAME	MODERN REGION
Kāshmīra	Kashmir
Kurukṣetra	Parts of Haryana
Vanga	Parts of Bengal
Prāgjyotiṣha	Roughly today's Assam
Kaccha	Kutch (Gujarat)
Kerala	Kerala
Gandhāra	Northwest (modern Afghanistan/Pakistan)
Magadha	Parts of Bihar
Kāshī	Varanasi region
Kalinga	Odisha region

## 03 Bhāratavarṣha, Jambudvīpa & Bhārata

### Bhāratavarṣha — The Country of the Bharatas

The Mahābhārata uses the term '**Bhāratavarṣha**' to refer to the entire Indian Subcontinent. This name means '**the country of the Bharatas**'. The word 'Bharata' first appears in the Ṛig Veda, where it refers to one of the main Vedic groups of people. In later literature, several kings named 'Bharata' are also mentioned. The text of the Mahābhārata includes the names of numerous rivers and peoples, clearly covering the entire geography of the Subcontinent.

**Key Fact:** Scholars generally agree that the Mahābhārata was written from a few centuries **BCE** onward. The terms 'Bhāratavarṣha' and 'Jambudvīpa' appear in this great text.

### Jambudvīpa — The Island of the Jamun Tree

The second major ancient name for India is '**Jambudvīpa**', meaning '**the island of the fruit of the jamun tree**'. The jamun (also called 'jambul tree' or 'Malabar plum tree') is a common tree native to India. Over time, 'Jambudvīpa' came to mean the entire Indian Subcontinent.

**Emperor Ashoka's Use:** Emperor **Ashoka** (c. 250 BCE) used the name '**Jambudvīpa**' in one of his inscriptions to describe the whole of India. At that time, this included what is today India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and parts of Afghanistan.

## Bhārata — From the Viṣṇu Purāṇa

A few centuries after the Mahābhārata, '**Bhārata**' became the name generally used for the Indian Subcontinent. The ancient text called the **Viṣṇu Purāṇa** gives a beautiful definition:

*"uttaram yat samudrasya himādreścaiva dakṣiṇam varṣam tad bhāratam nāma ..."*

**Translation:** "The country that lies north of the ocean and south of the snowy mountains is called Bhārata."

This name 'Bhārata' remains in use today. In north India, it is generally written as '**Bharat**', while in south India, it is often '**Bharatam**'.

## Ancient Tamil Literature Confirms the Definition

An ancient Tamil poem (about 2,000 years old) praises a king whose name is known "from Cape Kumari in the south, from the great mountain in the north, from the oceans on the east and on the west." This shows that different parts of the country independently recognised the same geographical extent of India — from the **Himalayas** to **Kanyakumari**, from the **Arabian Sea** to the **Bay of Bengal**.

NAME	MEANING	SOURCE
Sapta Sindhava	Land of seven rivers	Ṛig Veda
Bhāratavarṣha	Country of the Bharatas	Mahābhārata
Jambudvīpa	Island of the jamun fruit	Mahābhārata, Ashoka's inscriptions
Bhārata / Bharat	Land of the Bharatas	Viṣṇu Purāṇa & later texts

## 04 How Foreigners Named India — Persians & Greeks

### The Persians: Sindhu → Hindu

The first foreigners to mention India were the **Persians**, the ancient inhabitants of Iran. In the **6th century BCE**, a Persian emperor launched a military campaign and gained control of the region around the Indus River (called 'Sindhu' in Sanskrit). The Persians adapted 'Sindhu' in their own language and called the land '**Hind**', '**Hidu**', or '**Hindu**'.

**Important Note:** In ancient Persian, the word '**Hindu**' was a *purely geographical term*. It referred to the land near the Sindhu (Indus) River and did **not** refer to the Hindu religion.

## The Greeks: Hindu → Indoi / Indike

Based on Persian sources, the ancient Greeks named the region '**Indoi**' or '**Indike**'. They dropped the initial letter 'h' of 'Hindu' because the letter 'h' did not exist in the Greek language. The word later entered Latin as '**India**', and from Latin it was adopted into English and other European languages.

### The Name Chain: Sindhu to India

- ★ **Sanskrit:** Sindhu (the Indus River)
- ★ **Persian:** Sindhu → Hindhu / Hindu / Hind
- ★ **Greek:** Hindhu → Indoi / Indike (dropped 'h')
- ★ **Latin:** India
- ★ **English / French:** India / Inde

## 05 Chinese, Arabic & Other Foreign Names

### Chinese Names for India

The ancient Chinese also interacted with India extensively. In several texts, they refer to India as '**Yintu**' or '**Yindu**'. This word also originally comes from 'Sindhu', through the following chain: **Sindhu** → **Hindhu** → **Indu** → **Yindu**.

Another Chinese word for India was '**Tianzhu**', also derived from 'Sindhu'. Interestingly, 'Tianzhu' could also be understood as '**heavenly master**'. This reflects the deep respect the ancient Chinese had for India as the **land of the Buddha**.

**Xuanzang (Hiuen Tsang):** A famous Chinese scholar who travelled from China to India in the **7th century CE**. He visited many parts of India, met scholars, collected Buddhist texts, and returned to China after **17 years**. He translated the manuscripts he took back from **Sanskrit into Chinese**. Several other Chinese scholars visited India over the centuries.

### Hindustān — A Persian-Arabic Term

The term '**Hindustān**' was first used in a Persian inscription about **1,800 years ago**. Later, this became the term used by most invaders of India to describe the Indian Subcontinent. The name 'Hindustan' is still used colloquially in India today.

LANGUAGE	NAME FOR INDIA	DERIVED FROM
Sanskrit	Sindhu / Bhārata / Jambudvīpa	Original Indian names
Persian	Hind / Hindu / Hindustān	Sindhu
Greek	Indoi / Indike	Hindu (dropped 'h')
Latin	India	Greek Indoi
Chinese	Yintu / Yindu / Tianzhu	Sindhu → Hindhu → Indu
Arabic & Persian	Al-Hind / Hindustān	Sindhu / Hindu
English	India	Latin India
French	Inde	Latin India

## 06 India in the Constitution

### "India, that is Bharat"

The Indian **Constitution**, which was first written in English, uses the phrase "**India, that is Bharat**" right at the beginning (Article 1). Similarly, the Hindi version of the Constitution mentions the same as "**Bhārat arthāth India**". This connects the ancient name 'Bharat' with the modern English name 'India' in the supreme law of the land.

#### Constitution

A document that spells out the basic principles and laws of a nation. The Indian Constitution came into force on **26 January 1950**. It will be studied in detail in Grade 7.

**Article 1 of the Indian Constitution:** "India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States." — This is the very first article, establishing both the names 'India' and 'Bharat' as official names for the country.

### Sources of Information about India's Past

The chapter tells us that we can learn about India's past and evolution from many different sources. These include ancient texts (like the Ṛig Veda, Mahābhārata, and Purāṇas), accounts of foreign travellers and pilgrims (like Xuanzang), inscriptions (like those of Emperor Ashoka), and stone records left by the Persians.

SOURCE TYPE	EXAMPLE	WHAT IT TELLS US
Ancient Indian Texts	Ṛig Veda, Mahābhārata, Viṣṇu Purāṇa	Names like Sapta Sindhava, Bhāratavarṣha, Jambudvīpa
Inscriptions	Ashoka's rock edicts	Use of 'Jambudvīpa' for the whole subcontinent
Foreign Traveller Accounts	Xuanzang (Chinese), Greek writers	Foreign names like Yindu, Indoi, India
Persian Records	Stone inscriptions of Persian emperors	Names like Hind, Hindu, Hindustān
Tamil Literature	Ancient Tamil poems (c. 2,000 years old)	Geographical extent from Kumari to the great mountain

## 07 Chapter Summary & Key Takeaways

### ★ Complete Chapter Summary

- ★ India is an ancient land that has had **many names** in the course of its history.
- ★ The names given by the **ancient inhabitants** of India include '**Jambudvīpa**' and '**Bhārata**'. 'Bhārata' became widespread over time and is the name of India in most Indian languages.
- ★ **Foreign visitors** to, or invaders of, India mostly adopted names derived from the **Sindhu** or **Indus** River. This resulted in names like '**Hindu**', '**Indoi**', and eventually '**India**'.
- ★ The Ṛig Veda named the northwest region '**Sapta Sindhava**' (land of seven rivers), while the Mahābhārata named the entire subcontinent '**Bhāratavarṣha**' and '**Jambudvīpa**'.
- ★ The **Viṣṇu Purāṇa** defined Bhārata as the land between the ocean and the snowy mountains.
- ★ The **Indian Constitution** opens with "**India, that is Bharat**", connecting the ancient and modern names.

**Timeline of Names:** Ṛig Veda (Sapta Sindhava, several thousand years ago) → Mahābhārata (Bhāratavarṣha, Jambudvīpa — a few centuries BCE) → Ashoka's inscriptions (Jambudvīpa — c. 250 BCE) → Viṣṇu Purāṇa (Bhārata) → Persian records (Hind/Hindu — 6th century BCE) → Hindustān (c. 1,800 years ago) → Constitution of India (India, that is Bharat — 1950).

## 08 Glossary of Key Terms

### Inhabitants

People who live in a particular place. The chapter discusses how India's inhabitants gave their land names like Bhārata.

### Constitution

A document that spells out the basic principles and laws of a nation. The Indian Constitution came into force in 1950.

### Sapta Sindhava

Meaning 'land of seven rivers', this is the name given to the northwest region of the Indian Subcontinent in the Ṛig Veda.

### Sindhu

The Sanskrit name for the Indus River. It is the root word from which names like Hindu, India, and Hindustān were derived.

### **Bhāratavarṣha**

Meaning 'the country of the Bharatas', this term from the Mahābhārata refers to the entire Indian Subcontinent.

### **Jambudvīpa**

Meaning 'the island of the fruit of the jamun tree', this name was used for India in the Mahābhārata and Ashoka's inscriptions.

### **Bhārata / Bharat**

The most widespread ancient Indian name for the Subcontinent. Defined in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa as the land north of the ocean and south of the Himalayas.

### **Inscriptions**

Writing carved on stone, metal, or other hard surfaces. Ashoka left many inscriptions that help us understand ancient India.

### **Hindustān**

A Persian term for India, first used in a Persian inscription about 1,800 years ago. Later used widely by invaders and travellers.

### **Subcontinent**

A large, relatively self-contained landmass forming a subdivision of a continent. The Indian Subcontinent includes India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka.

### **BCE (Before Common Era)**

A dating system used for years before the year 1. For example, 250 BCE means 250 years before the Common Era began.

### **CE (Common Era)**

A dating system for years from year 1 onward. Xuanzang visited India in the 7th century CE (the 600s).

## **09 Questions, Answers & MCQs**

### **NCERT Exercise Questions with Answers**

#### **Q1. Discuss what could be the meaning of the quotation at the start of the chapter.**

The quotation by Sri Aurobindo states that India achieved spiritual and cultural unity at a very early time. It means that the people living between the Himalayas and the two seas (Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal) were bound together by a common spiritual and cultural heritage. Even though India has always had diverse languages, regions, and communities, a deep sense of shared culture, traditions, and spiritual values united them all as one civilisation. This unity became the essence of Indian life and identity, long before political boundaries were drawn.

## Q2. True or False?

**(a) The Ṛig Veda describes the entire geography of India. — False.** The Ṛig Veda only describes the northwest region of the Subcontinent, calling it 'Sapta Sindhava' (land of seven rivers). It does not cover the entire geography of India.

**(b) The Viṣṇu Purāṇa describes the entire Subcontinent. — True.** The Viṣṇu Purāṇa defines Bhārata as "the country that lies north of the ocean and south of the snowy mountains," which covers the entire Indian Subcontinent.

**(c) In Ashoka's time, 'Jambudvīpa' included what is today India, parts of Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan. — True.** Emperor Ashoka (c. 250 BCE) used 'Jambudvīpa' to describe the whole of India, which at that time included today's Bangladesh, Pakistan, and parts of Afghanistan.

**(d) The Mahābhārata lists many regions, including Kashmir, Kutch, and Kerala. — True.** The Mahābhārata mentions regions like Kāshmīra (Kashmir), Kaccha (Kutch), Kerala, and many others.

**(e) The term 'Hindustān' first appeared in a Greek inscription more than 2,000 years ago. — False.** The term 'Hindustān' first appeared in a *Persian* inscription about 1,800 years ago, not a Greek inscription.

**(f) In ancient Persian, the word 'Hindu' refers to the Hindu religion. — False.** In ancient Persian, 'Hindu' was a purely geographical term referring to the land near the Indus (Sindhu) River. It did not refer to the Hindu religion.

**(g) 'Bhārata' is a name given to India by foreign travellers. — False.** 'Bhārata' is a name given to India by its own inhabitants. It comes from Indian texts like the Mahābhārata and Viṣṇu Purāṇa. Foreign visitors used names derived from 'Sindhu' instead.

## Q3. If you were born some 2,000 years ago and had the chance to name our country, what name or names might you have chosen, and why?

If I were born 2,000 years ago, I might have chosen a name like '**Himadri-Sagara Bhumi**' (Land between the Mountains and the Seas), because India's most striking natural features are the great Himalayas in the north and the vast oceans surrounding it on three sides. Another name could be '**Nadi Maata Bhumi**' (Land of Mother Rivers), because India's civilisation grew along its great rivers like the Ganga, Yamuna, Sindhu, Narmada, and Godavari. Rivers provided water, fertile soil, and transport, making them central to life. These names would capture both the geography and the spirit of the land. (Note: This is an imagination-based answer and students may write their own creative names with proper reasoning.)

#### Q4. Why did people travel to India from various parts of the world in ancient times? What could be their motivations?

People from various parts of the world travelled to India in ancient times for several reasons:

- 1. Trade:** India was famous for its spices, textiles, precious stones, and metals. Traders from Persia, Arabia, Greece, Rome, and China came to India for profitable trade.
- 2. Knowledge and Education:** India was known as a centre of learning. Universities like Takshashila (Taxila) and later Nalanda attracted scholars from across Asia. Xuanzang came for Buddhist studies.
- 3. Religion and Pilgrimage:** Buddhism and other Indian religions spread across Asia. Chinese scholars like Xuanzang and Faxian travelled to India to visit sacred Buddhist sites and collect religious texts.
- 4. Military Conquest:** Some foreigners, like the Persian emperors and later Greek ruler Alexander, came with the aim of conquering territories and expanding their empires.
- 5. Curiosity and Exploration:** Ancient travellers were curious about other lands, cultures, and peoples. India's rich civilisation, diverse geography, and spiritual traditions attracted explorers who wanted to document and understand the world.

### Additional Short Answer Questions

#### Q5. What is the meaning of 'Sapta Sindhava'? In which text does this name appear?

'Sapta Sindhava' means '**the land of the seven rivers**'. This name appears in the **Rig Veda**, India's most ancient text, which is several thousand years old. It refers specifically to the northwest region of the Indian Subcontinent, around the Indus River and its tributaries.

#### Q6. How did the name 'India' originate? Trace the chain from Sanskrit to English.

The name 'India' originated from the Sanskrit word '**Sindhu**' (the name for the Indus River). When the Persians encountered this river in the 6th century BCE, they adapted 'Sindhu' to '**Hindu**' in their language. The ancient Greeks, who learnt about India from Persian sources, dropped the 'h' (which did not exist in Greek) and called the region '**Indoi**' or '**Indike**'. This became '**India**' in Latin, and from Latin it passed into English and other European languages.

#### Q7. What does the Viṣṇu Purāṇa say about Bhārata? Write its Sanskrit verse and translation.

The Viṣṇu Purāṇa states: "*uttaram yat samudrasya himādreścaiva dakṣiṇam varṣam tad bhāratam nāma...*" which means "**The country that lies north of the ocean and south of the snowy mountains is called Bhārata.**" This verse clearly defines the geographical extent of Bhārata as the land between the Indian Ocean in the south and the Himalayan mountains in the north.

#### Q8. Who was Xuanzang? Why did he visit India?

Xuanzang (formerly spelt Hiuen Tsang or Hsuan Tsang) was a famous **Chinese scholar and traveller** who visited India in the **7th century CE**. He came to India to study Buddhism, visit sacred Buddhist sites, meet Indian scholars, and collect Buddhist texts and manuscripts. He travelled across many parts of India for **17 years**. After returning to China, he translated the manuscripts he brought back from **Sanskrit into Chinese**, making a great contribution to spreading Buddhist knowledge in East Asia.

### Q9. Why is the word 'Hindu' considered a geographical term in ancient Persian?

In ancient Persian, the word 'Hindu' was purely a geographical term because it was simply the Persian adaptation of the Sanskrit word '**Sindhu**', which meant the Indus River and the land around it. The Persians called the people living near the Sindhu (Indus) as 'Hindu' — meaning 'people of the Sindhu region'. It had **no religious meaning** at that time. The religious meaning of 'Hindu' developed much later in history.

## Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)

### 1. What does 'Sapta Sindhava' mean?

- (a) Land of the Buddha
- (b) Land of the seven rivers
- (c) Island of the jamun tree
- (d) Country of the Bharatas

Answer: (b) Land of the seven rivers

### 2. The term 'Bhāratavarṣha' appears in which ancient text?

- (a) Ṛig Veda
- (b) Rāmāyaṇa
- (c) Mahābhārata
- (d) Arthashastra

Answer: (c) Mahābhārata

### 3. Emperor Ashoka used which name for India in his inscriptions?

- (a) Bhāratavarṣha
- (b) Hindustān
- (c) Jambudvīpa
- (d) Sapta Sindhava

Answer: (c) Jambudvīpa

### 4. 'Jambudvīpa' means:

- (a) Land of seven rivers
- (b) Land of the Bharatas
- (c) Island of the fruit of the jamun tree
- (d) Heavenly master

Answer: (c) Island of the fruit of the jamun tree

### 5. The first foreigners to mention India were the:

- (a) Chinese

- (b) Greeks
- (c) Arabs
- (d) Persians

Answer: (d) Persians

**6. Why did the Greeks drop the letter 'h' from 'Hindu'?**

- (a) They found it difficult to pronounce
- (b) The letter 'h' did not exist in the Greek language
- (c) They wanted a shorter name
- (d) The Persians told them to drop it

Answer: (b) The letter 'h' did not exist in the Greek language

**7. The Chinese word 'Tianzhu' for India means:**

- (a) Land of rivers
- (b) Heavenly master
- (c) Great kingdom
- (d) Sacred land

Answer: (b) Heavenly master

**8. The term 'Hindustān' first appeared in an inscription of which language?**

- (a) Greek
- (b) Sanskrit
- (c) Persian
- (d) Chinese

Answer: (c) Persian

**9. According to the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Bhārata lies between:**

- (a) Two rivers
- (b) The ocean and the snowy mountains
- (c) The desert and the forest
- (d) The eastern and western seas

Answer: (b) The ocean and the snowy mountains

**10. Xuanzang visited India in which century?**

- (a) 3rd century BCE
- (b) 5th century CE
- (c) 7th century CE
- (d) 10th century CE

✔ Answer: (c) 7th century CE

11. In ancient Persian, the word 'Hindu' was:

- (a) A religious term
- (b) A purely geographical term
- (c) A name for a king
- (d) A name for a river only

✔ Answer: (b) A purely geographical term

12. The Indian Constitution's Article 1 states:

- (a) India shall be a republic
- (b) India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States
- (c) India is the land of seven rivers
- (d) India is called Jambudvīpa

✔ Answer: (b) India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States

## Case-Based / Source-Based Questions

### Case Study 1: The Viṣṇu Purāṇa Definition

*"uttaram yat samudrasya himādreścaiva dakṣiṇam varṣam tad bhāratam nāma ..."* — This verse from the Viṣṇu Purāṇa translates to: "The country that lies north of the ocean and south of the snowy mountains is called Bhārata."

1. What does this verse define?
2. Which text is this verse from?
3. What are the 'snowy mountains' referred to here?
4. Is this definition still valid for modern India? Explain.

1. This verse defines the geographical extent of Bhārata (India) — the land lying between the ocean and the snowy mountains.
2. This verse is from the **Viṣṇu Purāṇa**, an ancient Indian text.
3. The 'snowy mountains' refer to the **Himalayas**, the great mountain range in the north of the Indian Subcontinent.
4. Yes, this definition is broadly still valid. Modern India lies south of the Himalayan mountains and is surrounded by the Indian Ocean (Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal, and Indian Ocean) on three sides. The geographical boundaries described match India's location today.

### Case Study 2: The Name Chain — Sindhu to India

The ancient Sanskrit name for the Indus River was 'Sindhu'. When the Persians gained control of the Indus region in the 6th century BCE, they adapted 'Sindhu' in their language and called the land 'Hind', 'Hidu', or 'Hindu'. The Greeks, learning from Persian sources, dropped the 'h' and called the region 'Indoi' or 'Indike'. This later became 'India' in Latin and English.

1. What was the original Sanskrit name for the Indus River?
2. Why did the Persians change 'Sindhu' to 'Hindu'?
3. Why did the Greeks drop the letter 'h'?
4. Trace the complete chain from Sindhu to the English word 'India'.

1. The original Sanskrit name for the Indus River was '**Sindhu**'.
2. The Persians changed 'Sindhu' to 'Hindu' because they adapted the word to fit **their own language (Old Persian)**. This was a natural linguistic adaptation.
3. The Greeks dropped the letter 'h' because **the letter 'h' did not exist in the Greek language**. So 'Hindu' became 'Indu' and then 'Indoi/Indike'.
4. The chain: **Sindhu (Sanskrit) → Hindu/Hind (Persian) → Indoi/Indike (Greek) → India (Latin) → India (English)**.











### Case Study 3: Xuanzang's Journey to India

Xuanzang (formerly spelt Hiuen Tsang) travelled from China to India in the 7th century CE. He visited many parts of India, met scholars, collected Buddhist texts, and returned to China after 17 years. There, he translated the manuscripts he took back with him from Sanskrit into Chinese. The Chinese used names like 'Yintu', 'Yindu', and 'Tianzhu' for India. 'Tianzhu' could also mean 'heavenly master', reflecting the respect the Chinese had for India as the land of the Buddha.

1. Who was Xuanzang and when did he visit India?
2. How long did Xuanzang stay in India?
3. What does the Chinese word 'Tianzhu' mean?
4. What does this tell us about the relationship between India and China in ancient times?

1. Xuanzang was a **Chinese scholar and Buddhist pilgrim** who visited India in the **7th century CE**.
2. Xuanzang stayed in India for **17 years**, during which he visited many parts of the country, met Indian scholars, and collected Buddhist texts.
3. 'Tianzhu' could mean '**heavenly master**'. This reflected the great respect and reverence the ancient Chinese had for India as the birthplace of Buddhism and its spiritual teachings.
4. This tells us that India and China had a deep **cultural and intellectual relationship** in ancient times. Chinese scholars came to India seeking knowledge, especially about Buddhism. India was regarded as a great centre of learning and spirituality. The translation of Sanskrit texts into Chinese helped spread Indian ideas across East Asia, showing a rich history of cultural exchange between the two civilisations.

## Exam Tips — Score Maximum Marks

-  Memorise the name chain: **Sindhu** → **Hindu** → **Indoi** → **India**. This is frequently asked in exams.
-  Know the difference: **R̥ig Veda** names only the northwest (Sapta Sindhava), while **Mahābhārata** and **Viṣṇu Purāṇa** name the whole Subcontinent.
-  Remember: In ancient Persian, '**Hindu**' was **geographical, NOT religious**. This is a common True/False trap.
-  The term '**Hindustān**' first appeared in a **Persian** (not Greek) inscription — another common trick question.
-  Emperor **Ashoka (c. 250 BCE)** used '**Jambudvīpa**' — remember the name and date together.
-  Learn the Viṣṇu Purāṇa verse and its translation — it often appears in source-based questions.
-  **Xuanzang**: Chinese traveller, 7th century CE, stayed 17 years, translated Sanskrit to Chinese. These are key facts.
-  The Constitution phrase is "**India, that is Bharat**" — not 'Bharat, that is India'. Pay attention to the exact wording.
-  For 5-mark answers, always include examples, dates, and names of texts. Structure your answer in clear paragraphs.
-  In map-based questions, identify natural boundaries: Himalayas (north), Arabian Sea (west), Bay of Bengal (east), Indian Ocean (south).

## UNIQUE STUDY POINT

Prepared by Sumeet Sahu | Amitesh Nagar, Indore (M.P.)

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