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CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION TO INDIAN GEOGRAPHY

India's geographic mainland extends from Kashmir(Indracol) in the north to Kanniyakumari(cape camorine) in the south and Arunachal Pradesh(walong town) in the east to Gujarat(rajhera creek) in the west. India's territorial limit further extends towards the sea upto 12 Nautical miles (about 21.9 km) from the coast. Our southern boundary extends upto 6°45' N latitude in the Bay of Bengal.

The latitudinal and longitudinal extent of India, they are roughly about 30 degrees, whereas the actual distance measured from north to south extremity is 3,214 km, and that from east to west is only 2,933 km. This difference is based on the fact that the distance between two longitudes decreases towards the poles whereas the distance between two latitudes remains the same everywhere. Lying between latitude 8 4' N to 37 6' N and from longitude 68 7' E to 97 25'E, the country is divided into almost equal part by the Tropic of Cancer (passes from Jabalpur in MP).

Southern part of the country lies within the tropics and the northern part lies in the sub-tropical zone or the warm temperate zone. The location of India is responsible for large variations in land forms, climate, soil types and natural vegetation in the country. The southernmost point in Indian territory, (in Great Nicobar Island) is the Indira Point (64 5'), while Kanyakumari, also known as Cape Comorin, is the southernmost point of Indian mainland. **The 82 30' E longitude is taken as the Standard Time Meridian of India, as it passes through the middle of India (from Naini, near Allahabad)**

From the values of longitude, it is quite discernible that there is a variation of nearly 30 degrees, which causes a time difference of nearly two hours between the easternmost and the westernmost parts. While the sun rises in the northeastern states about two hours earlier as compared to Jaisalmer, the watches in Dibrugarh, Imphal in the east and Jaisalmer, Bhopal or Chennai in the other parts of India show the same time our country.

India with its **area of 3.28 million sq. km** accounts for **2.4 per cent of the world's land surface area** and stands as the seventh largest country in the world.

India is endowed with great physical diversity. The presence of lofty mountains in the north; large rivers such as Ganga, Brahmaputra, Mahanadi, Krishna, Godavari and Kaveri; green forested hills in northeast and south India; and the vast sandy expanse of *Marusthali*.

India is bounded by the Himalayas in the north, Hindukush and Sulaiman ranges in the northwest, Purvachal hills in the north-east and by the large expanse of the Indian ocean in the south, it forms a great geographic entity known as the *Indian subcontinent*. It includes the countries — Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and India. The Himalayas, together with other ranges, have acted as a formidable physical barrier in the past. Except for a few mountain passes such as the Khyber, the Bolan, the Shipkila, the Nathula, the Bomdila, etc. it was difficult to cross it. It has contributed towards the evolving of a unique regional identity of the Indian subcontinent.

Peninsular part of India extends towards the Indian Ocean. This has provided the country with a **coastline of 6,100 km in the mainland and 7,517 km in the entire geographical coast of the mainland plus the island groups Andaman and Nicobar** located in the Bay of Bengal and the Lakshadweep in the Arabian Sea. Thus India, as a country, is a physically diverse land providing occurrence of varied resources.

Facts to Remember

AREA & BOUNDARIES

- India stretches 3,214 km from North to South & 2,933 km from East to West.
- Area: 32,87,263 sq. km. Accounts for 2.4% of the total world area and roughly 17.6% of the world population.
- Mainland India has a coastline of 6,100 km. Including the Lakshadweep and Andaman and Nicobar Island, the coastline measures about 7516.6 km.
- In India, of the total land mass:

Plains	:	43.3%
Hills	:	18.6%
Plateaus	:	27.7%
Mountains	:	10.7%
- In the South, on the eastern side, the Gulf of Manner & the Palk Strait separate India from Sri Lanka.
- Total and neighbours: 7 (Pakistan, Afghanistan, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar).
- India's Islands include and Andaman & Nicobar Islands in Bay of Bengal and Lakshadweep, Minicoy & Amindive Islands in the Arabian Sea.

POSITION OF STATES

- UP borders the maximum number of States- 8 (Uttarakhand, HP, Haryana, Rajasthan, MP, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar). After UP is Asom, which touches the border of 7 States.
- Tropic of Cancer passes through 8 States: Gujarat, Rajasthan, MP, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand WB, Trioura, Mizoram.
- Indian Standard Meridian passes through 5 States: UP, MP, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, AP.
- 9 States form the coast of India. They are: Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and West Bengal.
- 2 Union Territories, viz. Daman & Diu and Puducherry are also on the coast.
- The Union Territories of Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep are made up of islands only.
- **The Eastern Ghats** (Highest peak: Mahendra Giri (1501m))
- **The Nilgiris or The Blue Mountains:** Meeting place of the Western and the Eastern Ghats. Two highest peaks are Dodda Betta and Makurti.
- The highest peak of Peninsular India is Anaimudi (2695m) in Anaimalai Hills.
- **Cardamom hills or Ealaimalai** is the southernmost mountain range of India.
- Longest sea boundary – **Gujrat**
- **Bangladesh's boundary** covering max area with india.

Indian States and the international boundaries are:

- **Bordering Pakistan** Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat
- **Bordering China** Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh
- **Bordering Nepal** Bihar, Uttarakhand, UP, Sikkim, West Bengal
- **Bordering Bangladesh** West Bengal, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Tripuro, Asom
- **Bordering Bhutan** West Bengal, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Asom

- **Bordering Myanmar** Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram
- **Bordering Afghanistan** Jammu and Kashmir (Pakistan-occupied area)

CODES FOR RANGES

- **Northern Most Ranges:-** kar ladka zankar pir dhola shiv
- **Central Indian :-** Vin sat sat aaj ga ma mai
- **South :-** NAC
- **Eastern Ghat:-** nala pakode ja shivroy
- **North East:-** garo khasi jyanti bara
- **North East north to south :-** Mishmi patka mikir naga mizo

TROPIC OF CANCER PASSES THROUGH 8 STATES

- **G- GUJRAT**
- **R-RAJASTHAN**
- **M-MADHYA PRADESH**
- **C-CHATTISGARH**
- **J-JHARKHAND**
- **W-WEST BENGAL**
- **T-TRIPURA**
- **M-MIZORAM**

CODE FOR TROPIC OF CANCER

- **(GRM(Garm) C(si) J(jo) W (wo) TM (tum))**

INDIAN STANDARD TIME PASSES THROUGH 5 STATES

- **Uttar Pradesh**
- **Madhya Pradesh**
- **Chattisgarh**
- **Odisha**
- **Andhra Pradesh**

Code for IST :- UMCOA

CHAPTER - 2

STRUCTURE AND PHYSIOGRAPHY

According to estimates the earth is approximately 460 million years old. Over the long years, it has undergone numerous changes brought about primarily by the **endogenic and exogenic forces**. These forces have played a significant role in giving shape to various surface and subsurface features of the earth.

The Indian plate was to the south of the equator millions of years ago, it was much larger in size and the Australian plate was a part. Over millions of years, this plate broke into many parts and the Australian plate moved towards the southeastern direction and the Indian plate to the north. This northward movement of the Indian plate is still continuing and it has significant consequences on the physical environment of the Indian subcontinent.

It is primarily through the interplay of these endogenic and exogenic forces and lateral movements of the plates that the present geological structure and geomorphologic processes active in the Indian subcontinent came into existence.

On the basis of its geological structure and formations, India can be divided into three **geological divisions**. These geological regions broadly follow the physical features :-

- I. The Peninsular Block
- II. The Himalayas and other Peninsular Mountains
- III. Indo-Ganga-Brahmaputra Plain.

THE PENINSULAR BLOCK

The northern limit of the Peninsular Block may be taken as an irregular line running from Kachchh along the western flank of the Aravali Range near Delhi and then roughly parallel to the Yamuna and the Ganga as far as the Rajmahal Hills and the Ganga delta. Apart from these, the Karbi Anglong and the Meghalaya Plateau in the northeast and Rajasthan in the west are also extensions of this block. The northeastern parts are separated by the Malda fault in West Bengal from the Chotanagpur plateau. In Rajasthan, the desert and other desert-like features overlay this block.

The Peninsula is formed essentially by a great complex of very ancient **gneisses and granites**, which constitutes a major part of it. Since the Cambrian period, the Peninsula has been standing like a rigid block with the exception of some of its western coast which is submerged beneath the sea and some other parts changed due to tectonic activity. As a part of the **Indo-Australian Plate**, it has been subjected to various vertical movements and block faulting. The **rift valleys of the Narmada, the Tapi and the Mahanadi and the Satpura block mountains** are some examples of it. The Peninsula mostly consists of relict and residual mountains like the Aravali hills, the Nallamala hills, the Javadi hills, the Veliconda hills, the Palkonda range and the Mahendragiri hills, etc. The river valleys here are shallow with low gradients.

Most of the east flowing rivers form deltas before entering into the Bay of Bengal. The deltas formed by the Mahanadi, the Krishna, the Kaveri and the Godavari are important examples.

THE HIMALAYAS AND OTHER PENINSULAR MOUNTAINS

The Second division Himalayas along with other Peninsular mountains are young, weak and flexible in their geological structure unlike the rigid and stable Peninsular Block. Consequently, they are still subjected to the interplay of exogenic and endogenic forces, resulting into faults, folds and thrust plains. These mountains are tectonic in origin, dissected by fast-flowing rivers which are in their youthful stage. Landforms like gorges, V-shaped valleys, rapids, waterfalls, etc. are indicative of this stage.

INDO-GANGETIC -BRAHMAPUTRA PLAIN

The third geological division of India comprises the plains formed by the river Indus, the Ganga and the Brahmaputra. Originally, it was a geo-synclinal depression which attained its maximum development during the third phase of the Himalayan mountain formation approximately about 64 million years ago. Since then, it has been gradually filled by the sediments brought by the Himalayan and Peninsular rivers. Average depth of alluvial deposits in these plains ranges from 1,000-2,000 m.

Thus there are significant variations among the different regions of India in terms of their geological structure, which has far-reaching impact upon other related aspects. Variations in the physiography and relief are important among these. The relief and physiography of India has been greatly influenced by the geological and geomorphological processes active in the Indian subcontinent.

PHYSIOGRAPHY

'Physiography' of an area is the outcome of structure, process and the stage of development. India is characterised by great diversity in its physical features. The north has a vast expanse of rugged topography consisting of a series of mountain ranges with varied peaks, beautiful valleys and deep gorges. The south consists of stable table land with highly dissected plateaus, denuded rocks and developed series of scarps. In between these two lies the vast north Indian plain. Based on these macro variations, India can be divided into the following **physiographic divisions**:

- a) The Northern and Northeastern Mountains
- b) The Northern Plain
- c) The Peninsular Plateau
- d) The Indian Desert
- e) The Coastal Plains
- f) The Islands.

The North and Northeastern Mountains

The North and Northeastern Mountains consist of the Himalayas and the Northeastern hills. The Himalayas consist of a series of parallel mountain ranges. Some of the important ranges are the Greater Himalayan range, which includes the Great Himalayas and the Trans- Himalayan range, the Middle Himalayas and the Shiwalik. The general orientation of these ranges is from northwest to the southeast direction in the northwestern part of India. Himalayas in the Darjiling and Sikkim regions lie in an eastwest direction, while in Arunachal Pradesh they are from southwest to the northwest direction. In Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram, they are in the northsouth direction. The approximate length of the Great Himalayan range, also known as the central axial range, is 2,500 km from east to west, and their width varies between 160-400 km from north to south. It is also evident from the map that the Himalayas stand almost like a strong and long wall between the Indian subcontinent and the Himalayas

are not only the physical barrier, they are also a climatic, drainage and cultural divide. There are large-scale regional variations within the Himalayas. On the basis of relief, alignment of ranges and other geomorphological features, the Himalayas can be divided into the following sub-divisions:

- (i) Kashmir or Northwestern Himalayas
- (ii) Himachal and Uttaranchal Himalayas
- (iii) Darjiling and Sikkim Himalayas
- (iv) Arunachal Himalayas
- (v) Eastern Hills and Mountains.

Kashmir or Northwestern Himalayas

It comprise a series of ranges such as the Karakoram, Ladakh, Zaskar and Pir Panjal. The northeastern part of the Kashmir Himalayas is a cold desert, which lies between the Greater Himalayas and the Karakoram ranges. Between the Great Himalayas and the Pir Panjal range, lies the world famous valley of Kashmir and the famous Dal Lake. Important glaciers of South Asia such as the Baltoro and Siachen are also found in this region. The Kashmir Himalayas are also famous for Karewa formations, which are useful for the cultivation of *Zafran*, a local variety of saffron. (Pampore in Kashmir valley)

Some of the important passes of the region are **Zoji La** on the Great Himalayas, Banihal on the Pir Panjal, Photu La on the Zaskar and Khardung La on the Ladakh range. Some of the important fresh lakes such as Dal and Wular and salt water lakes such as Pangong Tso and Tso Moriri are also in this region. This region is drained by the river Indus, and its tributaries such as the Jhelum and the Chenab. The Kashmir and north western Himalayas are well-known for their scenic beauty and picturesque landscape. The landscape of Himalayas is a major source of attraction for adventure tourists. Vaishno Devi, Amarnath Cave, Charar -e-Sharif, etc. are also located here and large number of pilgrims visit these places every year.

Srinagar, capital city of the state of Jammu and Kashmir is located on the banks of **Jhelum river**. Dal Lake in Srinagar presents an interesting physical feature. Jhelum in the valley of Kashmir is still in its youth stage and yet forms meanders – a typical feature associated with the mature stage in the evolution of fluvial land form

The southernmost part of this region consists of longitudinal valleys known as 'duns'. Jammu dun and Pathankot dun are important examples.

The Himachal and Uttaranchal Himalayas

This part lies approximately between the Ravi in the west and the Kali (a tributary of Ghaghara) in the east. It is drained by two major river systems of India, i.e. the Indus and the Ganga. Tributaries of the Indus include the river Ravi, the Beas and the Satluj, and the tributaries of Ganga flowing through this region include the Yamuna and the Ghaghara.

The northernmost part of the Himachal Himalayas is an extension of the Ladakh cold desert, which lies in the Spiti subdivision of district Lahul and Spiti. All the three ranges of Himalayas are prominent in this section also. These are the Great Himalayan range, the Lesser Himalayas (which is locally known as Dhauladhar in Himachal Pradesh and Nag tibha in Uttaranchal) and the Shiwalik range from the North to the South.

In Lesser Himalayas, the altitude between 1,000-2,000 m specially attracted to the British colonial administration, and subsequently, some of the important hill stations such as Dharamshala, Mussoorie, Shimla, Kaosani and the

cantonment towns and health resorts such as Shimla, Mussoorie, Kasauli, Almora, Lansdowne and Ranikhet, etc. were developed in this region.

The two distinguishing features of this region from the point of view of physiography are the '**Shiwalik**' and '**Dun formations**'. Some important duns located in this region are the Chandigarh-Kalka dun, Nalagarh dun, Dehra Dun, Harike dun and the Kota dun, etc. *Dehra Dun* is the largest of all the duns with an approximate length of 35-45 km and a width of 22-25 km.

In the Great Himalayan range, the valleys are mostly inhabited by the **Bhotia's**. These are nomadic groups who migrate to '**Bugyals**' (the summer glasslands in the higher reaches) during summer months and return to the valleys during winters. The famous '**Valley of flowers**' is also situated in this region. The places of pilgrimage such as the Gangotri, Yamunotri, Kedarnath, Badrinath and Hemkund Sahib are also situated in this part. The region is also known to have five famous Prayags. The five prayags - prayag meaning "confluence" in Sanskrit - also termed as "Prayag pentad", namely the five river confluences, are Vishnu Prayag, Nand Prayag, Karn Prayag, Rudra Prayag and Dev Prayag, in Uttarakhand.

The Darjiling and Sikkim Himalayas

They are flanked by Nepal Himalayas in the west and Bhutan Himalayas in the east. It is relatively small but is a most significant part of the Himalayas. Known for its fast-flowing rivers such as Tista, it is a region of high mountain peaks like Kanchenjunga (Kanchengiri), and deep valleys. The higher reaches of this region are inhabited by **Lepcha tribes** while the southern part, particularly the Darjiling Himalayas, has a mixed population of Nepalis, Bengalis and tribals from Central India. The British, taking advantage of the physical conditions such as moderate slope, thick soil cover with high organic content, well distributed rainfall throughout the year and mild winters, introduced tea plantations in this region. As compared to the other sections of the Himalayas, these along with the Arunachal Himalayas are conspicuous by the absence of the Shiwalik formations. In place of the Shiwaliks here, the '**duar formations**' are important, which have also been used for the development of tea gardens. Sikkim and Darjiling Himalayas are also known for their scenic beauty and rich flora and fauna, particularly various types of orchids.

The Arunachal Himalayas

These extend from the east of the Bhutan Himalayas up to the Diphu pass in the east. The general direction of the mountain range is from southwest to northeast. Some of the important mountain peaks of the region are Kangtu and Namcha Barwa. These ranges are dissected by fast-flowing river from the north to the south, forming deep gorges. Bhrmaputra flows through a deep gorge after crossing Namcha Barwa. Some of the important rivers are the Kameng, the Subansiri, the Dihang, the Dibang and the Lohit. These are perennial with the high rate of fall, thus, having the highest hydro-electric power potential in the country. An important aspect of the Arunachal Himalayas is the numerous ethnic tribal community inhabiting in these areas. Some of the prominent ones from west to east are the Monpa, Daffla, Abor, Mishmi, Nishi and the Nagas. Most of these communities practise **Jhumming**. It is also known as shifting or **slash and burn cultivation**. This region is rich in biodiversity which has been preserved by the indigenous communities. Due to rugged topography, the inter-valley transportation linkages are nominal. Hence, most of the interactions are carried through the duar region along the Arunachal-Assam border.

The Eastern Hills and Mountains

These are part of the Himalayan mountain system having their general alignment from the north to the south direction. They are known by different local names. In the north, they are known as Patkai Bum, Naga hills, the

Manipur hills and in the south as Mizo or Lushai hills. These are low hills, inhabited by numerous tribal groups practising Jhum cultivation.

Most of these ranges are separated from each other by numerous small rivers. The Barak is an important river in Manipur and Mizoram. The physiography of Manipur is unique by the presence of a large lake known as '**Loktak lake**' at the centre, surrounded by mountains from all sides. Mizoram which is also known as the '**Molassis basin**' which is made up of soft unconsolidated deposits. Most of the rivers in Nagaland form the tributary of the Brahmaputra. While two rivers of Mizoram and Manipur are the tributaries of the Barak river, which in turn is the tributary of Meghna; the rivers in the eastern part of Manipur are the tributaries of Chindwin, which in turn is a tributary of the Irrawady of Myanmar.

Facts to remember

- Mean 'Adobe of Snow'. They are one of the youngest fold mountain ranges in the world and comprise mainly sedimentary rocks.
- They stretch from the Indus river in the west to the Brahmaputra river in the east. Total length is about 5000 km. The width of the Himalayas varies from 500 km in Kashmir to 200 km in Arunachal Pradesh. Their average height is 2000m.
- The Eastern Himalayas-made up of Patkai Hills, Naga hills, Mizo Hills and the Garo, Khasi and Jaintia Hills-are known as Purvanchal.
- The Pamir, popularly known as the Roof of the World, is the connecting link between the Himalayas and the high ranges of Central Asia.
- Can be divided into 3 parallel or longitudinal zones, each with separate features-

The Great Himalayas or The Himadri

Average elevation extends upto 6000m & some of the world's highest peaks are here-

Mt. Everest (or Sagarmatha or Chomo or Chomo (Langma))	8850 m (in Nepal)
Mt Kanchenjunga	8598 m (in India)
Mt. Makalu	8481 m (in Nepal)
Mt. Dhaulagiri	8172 m (in Nepal)
Mt Cho Oyu	8153 m (in Nepal)
Mt Nanga Parbat	8126 m (in India)
Mt Annapurna	8078 m (in Nepal)
Mt Nanda Devi	7817 m (in Nepal)

- There are few passes and almost all of them have a height above 4,500 m. they include Shipki La and Bara Lapcha La in Himachal Pradesh, Burzil and Zozi La in Kashmir, Niti, Lipulekh and Thag La in Uttarakhand, and Jelep La and Nathu La in Sikkim.

Lesser Himalayas or The Himachal

- Average height of mountains is 3700-4500 m.
- Mountains and valleys are disposed in all directions (mountain rising to 5000 m and the valleys touching 1000 m).
- Its important ranges are: Dhauladhar, Pir Panjal, Nag Tibba, Mussoorie.
- Important hill resorts are: Shimla, Chhail, Ranikhet, Chakrata, Mussoorie, Nainital, Almora, Darjeeling.

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