

CLASS VII

SOCIAL SCIENCE

Chapter 1

Geographical Diversity of India

Exam-Preparation Notes

Concepts • Key Facts • Tables • Flow Charts • Map Points • Exam Questions • Quick Revision

Based on the new NCERT Social Science textbook
Exploring Society: India and Beyond — Part I

Designed for clear, quick and effective school-exam preparation

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1. CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

Big Questions of the Chapter

- What are some key geographical features of India?
- How does India's geographical diversity affect our lives?

Core Idea

India has a remarkable variety of landforms and environments. Mountains, plains, deserts, plateaus, coasts, islands, rivers and hills create different physical conditions. These conditions influence climate, water, agriculture, transport, settlements, occupations, culture and history.

Five broad regions introduced in the chapter

Region	Main idea
Great mountain zone	Himalayan mountain system; high peaks, glaciers and river sources.
Plains of the Ganga and Indus	Broad, fertile plains supported by major river systems.
Desert region	Thar Desert and its dry environment.
Southern peninsula	Peninsular Plateau, Ghats, rivers and mineral-rich landscapes.
Islands	Lakshadweep and Andaman and Nicobar island groups.

2. INDIA AND ITS GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

- India is the seventh-largest country in the world and is part of Asia.
- India, together with Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Myanmar, forms the region known as the Indian Subcontinent.
- The Himalayas form a major natural barrier in the north.
- The Thar Desert and Arabian Sea mark the western side; the Indian Ocean lies to the south and the Bay of Bengal to the east.
- These geographical features have influenced India's climate, culture and history.
- On a physical map, different colours in the legend indicate different elevations.

Memory Link: *Landforms → Climate → Water → Resources → Human activities*

3. THE HIMALAYAS

The Himalayas form a massive mountain system in the north. The chapter notes that the range is about 2,500 km long and contains many peaks above 8,000 metres, known as the 'Eight Thousanders'.

Importance

- Snow and glacier melt feed major rivers such as the Ganga, Indus and Brahmaputra.
- These rivers and their tributaries provide water for drinking, farming and industrial use.
- The Himalayas are important to many cultures and belief systems.
- The mountains support rich biodiversity and tourism in suitable areas.

Formation of the Himalayas

India was once part of Gondwana. It moved northwards and collided with Eurasia about 50 million years ago. The collision compressed and folded rocks, leading to the formation of the Himalayas. India continues to move northwards slowly.

Three Main Himalayan Ranges

Range	Key features
Himadri / Greater Himalayas	Highest and most rugged; many very high peaks; snow-covered for much of the year; few permanent settlements.
Himachal / Lower Himalayas	South of the Himadri; comparatively moderate climate; biodiversity and human habitation; several hill stations.
Shivalik / Outer Himalayas	Outermost and lowest range; rolling hills and forests; transition zone towards the Northern Plains.

Key facts: Himalaya means 'abode of snow'; Bhagirathi originates from Gaumukh at the edge of the Gangotri Glacier; kath-kuni/dhajji dewari are traditional western Himalayan house-building styles; Great Himalayan National Park is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

4. THE COLD DESERT OF INDIA — LADAKH

- Ladakh is a cold desert.
- Winter temperatures can fall below -30°C .
- Rainfall is very low; the landscape includes rocky terrain, deep valleys and lakes.
- Pangong Tso is a well-known lake and has salty water.
- Ladakh has unique wildlife such as snow leopards, ibex and Tibetan antelopes.
- The region is known for ancient monasteries and festivals such as Losar and the Hemis Festival.

Why is Ladakh called a cold desert?

A desert is not necessarily hot. Ladakh has very little rainfall and a cold, dry climate, so it is a cold desert.

5. THE GANGETIC PLAINS

- The Gangetic Plains are vast and fertile.
- They are nourished by river systems originating in the Himalayas, including the Ganga, Indus and Brahmaputra systems and their tributaries.
- River-borne minerals enrich the soil and support abundant agriculture.
- A large proportion of India's population lives in these plains.
- Flat land has supported extensive road and railway networks.
- Rivers have also been used for travel and trade for a very long time.

Why are the plains important?

Fertile soil + water + level land + transport = favourable conditions for agriculture, settlements and economic activity.

6. THE GREAT INDIAN DESERT / THAR DESERT

- The Thar is a vast arid region; most of it lies within India.
- It spans parts of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Punjab and Haryana.
- It has golden sand dunes, rugged terrain, very hot days and cold nights.
- Water is scarce, so people have adapted their food habits, clothing and lifestyles.
- Sand dunes form when wind shifts and shapes sand into hill-like formations.
- Traditional rainwater-harvesting systems such as taanka or kunds store rainwater.

Exam Connection

The Thar shows how people adapt to a difficult environment. Water scarcity encourages careful use, storage and reuse of water.

7. THE ARAVALLI HILLS

- The Aravallis are among the oldest mountain ranges in the world, about 2.5 billion years old.
- Their highest peak, Mount Abu, is over 1,700 m high.
- They extend across Delhi, Rajasthan, Haryana and Gujarat.
- They help shape the geography and climate of northwestern India.
- They act as a natural barrier limiting the eastward expansion of the Thar Desert.
- They are rich in minerals such as marble, granite, zinc and copper.
- Historic forts such as Chittorgarh, Kumbhalgarh and Ranthambore are associated with the Aravallis.

8. THE PENINSULAR PLATEAU

Plateau: an elevated landform that rises above the surrounding land and has a more or less flat surface, often with steep sides.

- The Peninsular Plateau is an old land formation in central and southern India.
- It is surrounded by water on three sides, so it is called the Peninsular Plateau.
- It is bordered by the Western Ghats and Eastern Ghats.
- The Western Ghats are taller and more continuous; the Eastern Ghats are lower and more broken.
- The Deccan Plateau lies between the two Ghats.
- Rivers such as the Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri flow across the plateau towards the east.
- The plateau is rich in minerals, forests and fertile land.
- West-flowing rivers include the Narmada and Tapi, which drain into the Arabian Sea.
- Waterfalls on rocky plateau surfaces can support tourism and hydroelectric power generation.

Human and environmental connection

The forests of the plateau are home to several tribal communities, including Santhal, Gond, Baiga, Bhil and Korku communities. The chapter highlights their distinct languages, traditions and close connections with nature.

9. INDIA'S AMAZING COASTLINES

India's coastline is over 7,500 km long and includes beaches, rocky cliffs, forests, coral reefs and other coastal landscapes.

West Coast	East Coast
Extends from Gujarat to Kerala through Maharashtra, Goa and Karnataka.	Extends from the Ganga delta to Kanyakumari along the Bay of Bengal.
Western Ghats are close to the Arabian Sea.	Eastern Ghats are separated from the sea by wider coastal plains.
Many short, swift rivers form estuaries; Narmada and Tapi have large estuaries.	Major rivers form broad deltas: Mahanadi, Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri.
Important ports and cities support economic activity.	Wide plains and fertile deltas support agriculture; Chilika and Pulicat are important water bodies.

Estuary: a widened river mouth where river water meets the sea. **Delta:** a landform formed when a river deposits sediments at its mouth, often creating a triangular or fan-shaped area.

Lagoon: a body of water separated from a larger body of water by a natural barrier. Pulicat Lake is an example mentioned in the chapter.

10. INDIAN ISLANDS

Island group	Key facts
Lakshadweep	An archipelago in the Arabian Sea, close to the Malabar Coast of Kerala; made up of 36 coral islands; not all are inhabited.
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	An archipelago of more than 500 large and small volcanic islands in the Bay of Bengal; rich in flora and fauna and historically important.

- Barren Island in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands is the only active volcano in India.
- Cellular Jail in the Andaman Islands has major historical significance because freedom fighters were imprisoned there during colonial rule.
- Island ecosystems include coral reefs, distinctive wildlife and marine environments.

11. THE SUNDARBANS

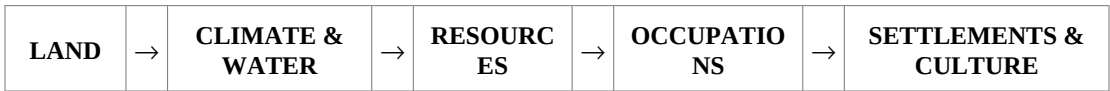
- The Sundarbans lie in the delta of the Ganga, Brahmaputra and their tributaries.
- It is a unique combination of river, sea and land environments.
- About half of the delta is in India and the rest is in Bangladesh.
- The region is a UNESCO World Heritage site.
- It is home to many species, including the Royal Bengal Tiger.

12. THE HILLS OF THE NORTHEAST

- The Garo, Khasi and Jaintia hills are part of the Meghalaya Plateau.
- The region is known for lush greenery, heavy rainfall and waterfalls.
- It has rich forests, unique wildlife and fertile land.
- Mawlynnong is known for cleanliness and eco-friendly practices.
- Living root bridges are created by guiding and weaving tree roots over many years.

13. GEOGRAPHY AND HUMAN LIFE

Central Idea: Physical geography does not exist separately from human life. Landforms and natural conditions influence how people live, while people also adapt to and use their surroundings.



- Mountains → rivers, forests, tourism, difficult transport in steep terrain.
- Plains → fertile soils, agriculture, dense settlements and transport networks.
- Deserts → water scarcity, adaptation, specialised lifestyles and water conservation.
- Plateaus → minerals, forests, rivers, waterfalls, industries and tribal livelihoods.
- Coasts → fishing, ports, trade, tourism, deltas and estuaries.
- Islands → marine ecosystems, coral reefs, distinctive wildlife and strategic/historical importance.

14. IMPORTANT TERMS

Term	Meaning
Geographical diversity	Variety of physical features and environmental conditions across places.
Indian Subcontinent	The region of Asia comprising India and its neighbouring countries as described in the chapter.
Himadri	The Greater Himalayas; highest and most rugged Himalayan range.
Himachal	The Lower Himalayas, south of the Himadri.
Shivalik	The outermost and lowest Himalayan range.
Cold desert	A desert region with very low precipitation and cold conditions, such as Ladakh.
Plateau	An elevated landform with a relatively flat surface.
Estuary	A widened river mouth where river water meets the sea.
Delta	A depositional landform formed at a river mouth.
Lagoon	A water body separated from a larger water body by a natural barrier.
Archipelago	A group or chain of islands.
Biodiversity	The variety of living organisms in an area.

15. IMPORTANT COMPARISONS

Topic	Point 1	Point 2
Himadri vs Himachal	Higher, more rugged and snow-covered.	Lower, more moderate climate and more habitation.
Himachal vs Shivalik	Higher Himalayan range; includes many hill stations.	Outermost and lowest; rolling hills and forests.
West Coast vs East Coast	Narrower; many estuaries; Western Ghats close to sea.	Wider plains; major river deltas.
Estuary vs Delta	Widened river mouth where river meets sea.	Depositional landform built from river sediments.
Lakshadweep vs Andaman & Nicobar	Arabian Sea; coral islands.	Bay of Bengal; volcanic islands; Barren Island is active.

16. CAUSE-AND-EFFECT REVISION

Question	Reason / Effect
Why are the Gangetic Plains fertile?	Major river systems bring and deposit minerals and sediments.
Why are the plains densely settled?	Fertile land, water, level terrain and economic opportunities support large populations.
Why are Himalayan rivers important?	Snow and glacier melt and precipitation feed rivers that supply water.
Why are roads easier to build across plains?	The land is relatively flat.
Why is water conservation essential in the Thar?	The region is arid and access to water is limited.
Why do many west-coast rivers form estuaries?	They are often short and swift because the Western Ghats lie close to the Arabian Sea.

Question	Reason / Effect
Why does the east coast have large deltas?	Major rivers travel across broad plains and deposit sediments near their mouths.
Why are waterfalls common on plateaus?	Rivers cross uneven and rocky surfaces and may descend steeply.
Why are the Himalayas important to culture?	The mountains and rivers are associated with many cultural and belief systems.
Why does geography influence occupations?	Different environments provide different resources, land conditions and opportunities.

17. MAP WORK CHECKLIST

For exam preparation, practise locating and identifying the following on a physical or political map of India:

- Himalayas and the three broad Himalayan ranges.
- Ladakh and Pangong Tso.
- Ganga, Indus and Brahmaputra river systems.
- Gangetic / Northern Plains.
- Thar Desert.
- Aravalli Hills and Mount Abu.
- Western Ghats and Eastern Ghats.
- Deccan Plateau.
- Godavari, Krishna, Kaveri, Mahanadi, Narmada and Tapti.
- West Coast and East Coast.
- Chilika Lake and Pulicat Lake.
- Lakshadweep.
- Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Barren Island.
- Sundarbans delta.
- Garo, Khasi and Jaintia Hills.

Map-skill tip: Use the physical map legend carefully. In the chapter, colours indicate elevation, helping you distinguish higher and lower areas.

18. EXAM-READY QUESTIONS

Q1. What is geographical diversity?

Answer: Geographical diversity is the variety of physical features and environmental conditions found in different places.

Q2. Name the five broad geographical regions introduced in the chapter.

Answer: The great mountain zone, the plains of the Ganga and the Indus, the desert region, the southern peninsula and the islands.

Q3. Why are the Himalayas called the 'Water Tower of Asia'?

Answer: Snow and glaciers in the Himalayas feed major rivers such as the Ganga, Indus and Brahmaputra, which provide water for many human activities.

Q4. Differentiate between the Himadri, Himachal and Shivalik.

Answer: The Himadri is the highest and most rugged; the Himachal lies south with a more moderate climate and greater habitation; the Shivalik is the outermost and lowest range with rolling hills and forests.

Q5. Why is Ladakh called a cold desert?

Answer: It receives very little rainfall and has a cold, dry climate, with rugged terrain and very low winter temperatures.

Q6. Why are the Gangetic Plains important for agriculture and settlements?

Answer: Their fertile soils, river water and level land support abundant agriculture, transport, settlements and economic activity.

Q7. How do people adapt to life in the Thar Desert?

Answer: They adapt their food, clothing and lifestyles to heat and water scarcity and use traditional systems such as taanka or kunds to store rainwater.

Q8. What is the importance of the Aravalli Hills?

Answer: They influence northwestern India's geography and climate, limit the eastward spread of the Thar Desert and contain important mineral resources.

Q9. Differentiate between the Western and Eastern Ghats.

Answer: The Western Ghats are taller and more continuous, while the Eastern Ghats are lower and more broken into smaller hills.

Q10. Distinguish between an estuary and a delta.

Answer: An estuary is a widened river mouth where river water meets the sea; a delta is formed when river sediments accumulate at the river mouth.

Q11. Name the two major island groups of India.

Answer: Lakshadweep and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Q12. Why are the east coast's river deltas important?

Answer: The deltas formed by rivers such as the Mahanadi, Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri provide fertile land suitable for farming.

Q13. How does geographical diversity affect human life?

Answer: It affects water availability, agriculture, occupations, transport, settlements, resources, culture and ways of life.

Q14. Give one example showing how people adapt to their environment.

Answer: People in the Thar Desert conserve and store scarce water; people in suitable Himalayan areas use building methods adapted to local climate and materials.

Q15. Why should students study India's geography using maps?

Answer: Maps help students locate physical features, understand their spatial relationships and connect landforms with rivers, settlements and human activities.

19. ONE-PAGE QUICK REVISION

INDIA → seventh-largest country → part of Asia → Indian Subcontinent

HIMALAYAS → natural barrier → glaciers → major rivers → Himadri / Himachal / Shivalik

LADAKH → cold desert → very low rainfall → rugged terrain → Pangong Tso → unique wildlife

GANGETIC PLAINS → fertile → river systems → agriculture → dense population → transport

THAR DESERT → arid → sand dunes → water scarcity → adaptation → taanka/kunds

ARAVALLIS → very old mountains → natural barrier → minerals → historic forts

PENINSULAR PLATEAU → old landform → Western/Eastern Ghats → Deccan Plateau → minerals/forests → rivers/waterfalls

WEST COAST → Gujarat to Kerala → Western Ghats close to sea → estuaries → ports

EAST COAST → Ganga delta to Kanyakumari → wider plains → major deltas → Chilika/Pulicat

ISLANDS → Lakshadweep = coral islands → Andaman & Nicobar = volcanic islands → Barren Island = active volcano

SUNDARBANS → Ganga-Brahmaputra delta → river + sea + land → mangrove environment → Royal Bengal Tiger

NORTHEAST HILLS → Garo, Khasi, Jaintia → heavy rainfall → forests → waterfalls → living root bridges

MASTER FORMULA

**GEOGRAPHY → NATURAL CONDITIONS → RESOURCES → HUMAN
ACTIVITIES → SETTLEMENTS → CULTURE & HISTORY**

Last-minute exam strategy

- Learn definitions and comparisons first.
- Revise the cause-and-effect table before the exam.
- Practise locating major physical features on the map.
- For 3–5 mark questions, write the main point first and then support it with 2–3 clear facts.
- In competency-based questions, identify the geographical factor, explain its effect, and give a relevant example.

Accuracy note: The chapter coverage and key factual points in these notes were checked against the current NCERT Chapter 1 listing and the chapter text available online.