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5. Tracing Names of India

Vocabulary & Hindi Meanings

शब्द / वाक्यांश (Word)	हिंदी अर्थ (Hindi Meaning)	हिंदी में स्पष्टीकरण (Hindi Explanation)
Recognise	पहचानना	किसी व्यक्ति या वस्तु को पहले से जानने के कारण उसे दोबारा देखकर या सुनकर पहचान लेना, या किसी बात को स्वीकार करना।
Well Define	भली-भाँति परिभाषित करना / स्पष्ट करना	किसी नियम, सीमा या बात को बिल्कुल साफ, सटीक और स्पष्ट तरीके से समझाना ताकि कोई भ्रम न रहे।
Individual	व्यक्ति / एकल इकाई	किसी समूह या समाज से अलग एक अकेला इंसान, जीव या वस्तु; व्यक्तिगत स्तर पर।
Population	जनसंख्या / आबादी	किसी विशेष क्षेत्र, शहर या देश में रहने वाले लोगों या जीवों की कुल संख्या; सांख्यिकी में किसी समूह के सभी तत्व।
Invaluable	अमूल्य / अत्यंत बहुमूल्य	कोई ऐसी चीज़ जो इतनी महत्वपूर्ण या उपयोगी हो कि उसकी कीमत पैसे में नहीं आंकी जा सके।
Insight	अंतर्दृष्टि / गहरी समझ	किसी जटिल स्थिति या समस्या की तह तक जाकर उसकी वास्तविक सच्चाई और कारण को समझने की क्षमता।
Perceive	महसूस करना / समझना / देखना	अपनी इंद्रियों (आँख, कान आदि) द्वारा किसी चीज़ का अनुभव करना या मन में किसी बात के प्रति कोई दृष्टिकोण बनाना।
Describe	वर्णन करना / विवरण देना	किसी वस्तु, व्यक्ति या घटना की विशेषताओं और रूप-रंग को शब्दों में विस्तार से बताना।
Plum Tree	आलू-बुखारे / बेर का पेड़	एक फलदार पेड़ जिस पर रसीले आलू-बुखारे (या प्लम) फल लगते हैं।

A. Choose and tick (✓) the correct option

1. What is the official name of India in Hindi? Answer: b. Bharat
2. What does 'Sapta Sindhava' refer to in the Rig Veda? Answer: b. Seven rivers
3. Which river is specifically referred to by the word 'Sindhu'? Answer: c. Indus
4. Which part of modern-day India does the term 'Vanga' mentioned in the Mahabharata represent? Answer: b. Parts of Bengal
5. What does 'Jambudvipa' literally mean? Answer: b. Island of the Jamun Tree
6. Which of the following emperor mentioned 'Jambudvipa' in his inscriptions? Answer: b. Ashoka
7. What name did the French use to refer to India? Answer: b. Inde
8. What does 'Tianzhu' mean in the context of ancient Chinese references to India? Answer: c. Sacred Land (or Heavenly Land)
9. How did the Persians adopt the name 'Sindhu' for their language? Answer: b. They replaced 'S' with 'H' (into Hindu)
10. What name did the Greeks use to refer to India? Answer: b. Indoi

B. Fill in the blanks

1. The term 'Sapta Sindhava' refers to seven rivers or the northwest region of the Indian subcontinent.
2. The Bharatas were a Vedic tribe first mentioned in the Rig Veda, the oldest Vedas.
3. The term 'Jambudvipa' means 'the island of the fruit of the Jamun tree', which is native to India.
4. King Bharata was the son of Dushyant and Shakuntala.
5. Emperor Ashoka mentioned the term 'Jambudvipa' in his several inscriptions around 250 BCE.
6. According to the Vishnu Purana, the country which is to the north of the ocean and south of the snowy mountains is called Bharatam (or Bharat).
7. In present day, 'Cape Kumari' is known as the Kanyakumari.
8. The name 'Hindustan' was first used in a Persian inscription around 1,700–1,800 years ago (3rd century CE Sasanian inscription).
9. The first mention of India by any foreigner came from the Persians during the 6th century BCE.
10. The ancient Greeks referred to India as 'Indoi' or 'Indike', adopting the name from the Persians.

C. State True or False

1. Bharat is accepted as the Hindi name for India. — **True** (Article 1 of Constitution describes 'India, that is Bharat')
2. The name 'Sapta Sindhava' refers to seven states in the eastern region of India. — **False** (Refers to seven rivers in the north-west)
3. The Rig Veda is considered the most ancient Indian text. — **True** (Composed c. 1500–1200 BCE)
4. The name 'Bharata' first appeared in the Mahabharata as a reference to the Indian subcontinent. — **False** (First appeared in the Rig Veda)
5. The Chinese referred to India as 'Hindu' in their writings. — **False** (Used terms like 'Tianzhu' or 'Yindu')
6. The term 'Hindustan' was first used in a Persian inscription around 2,500 years ago. — **False** (First used ~1,700–1,800 years ago in 3rd-century CE Sasanian inscription)
7. The name 'Bharat' has remained in use since ancient times. — **True** (Continuous usage from Vedic era to modern republic)
8. The river Saraswati is still flowing today in present-day Punjab. — **False** (It dried up in antiquity)
9. Ashoka mentioned 'Jambudvipa' in his several inscriptions. — **True** (In Minor Rock Edicts c. 250 BCE)
10. The ancient Greeks used the term 'Indoi' to refer to the Indian subcontinent. — **True** (Derived from Persian Hindush)

D. Very Short Answer Questions

1. Which ancient text mentions 'Sapta Sindhava'?

Ans: The Rig Veda mentions 'Sapta Sindhava' (the land of seven rivers).

2. Which two terms are used to describe the whole Indian subcontinent in the Mahabharata?

Ans: The terms 'Bharatavarsha' and 'Jambudvipa'.

3. What does 'Jambudvipa' literally mean?

Ans: It literally means 'The Island of the Jamun (Rose Apple) Tree'.

4. Which two regions are mentioned in ancient Tamil literature?

Ans: 'Tamilakam' (the broad cultural realm from Venkatam hills to Cape Kumari) and subdivisions like Chera, Chola, and Pandya nadu.

5. Which ancient text provides an early reference to 'Bharata'?

Ans: The Rig Veda (referring to the Vedic Bharata tribe and King Sudas).

E. Short Answer Questions

1. What rivers are part of the 'Sapta Sindhava', as mentioned in the Rig Veda?

Ans: The 'Sapta Sindhava' refers to the seven sacred rivers: the Indus (Sindhu), its five Punjab tributaries — Vitasta (Jhelum), Asikni (Chenab), Parushni (Ravi), Vipash (Beas), and Shutudri (Sutlej) — and the revered Saraswati river.

2. What role did foreign travellers play in the naming of India?

Ans: Foreign travellers adapted indigenous geographical names based on their phonetic systems: Persians replaced 'S' with 'H' turning Sindhu into Hindu; Greeks dropped the aspirate to coin Indos and Indoi (India); and Chinese pilgrims referred to it as Tianzhu or Yindu. Their travel accounts popularized these names across ancient Eurasia.

3. What are the two connotations about the origin of the term 'Bharatavarsha'?

Ans: 1. Tribal/Historical: Named after the prominent Vedic tribe, the Bharatas, featured in the Rig Veda.

2. Puranic/Legendary: Named after King Bharata, the legendary emperor and son of Dushyanta and Shakuntala, who unified the subcontinent.

4. Where did the word 'Hindustan' first emerge?

Ans: It first emerged in 3rd-century CE Sasanian Persian inscriptions (specifically the inscription of King Shapur I at Naqsh-e Rostam in modern Iran), combining 'Hindu' with the Persian suffix '-stan' meaning land or region.

5. How did the Greeks derive the name 'Indoi' for India?

Ans: The Greeks adopted the Old Persian term 'Hindush' (from Sanskrit Sindhu). Lacking the initial 'H' sound in classical Greek phonetics, they omitted the aspirate, modifying it to 'Indos' for the river and 'Indoi' for the people and realm.

F. Long Answer Questions

1. Describe the evolution of different names of India.

Ans: Over millennia, India has been designated by distinct historical and cultural names:

- Sapta Sindhava: Earliest Vedic identifier designating the northwest land of seven rivers.
- Jambudvipa: Ancient cosmological designation ('Island of the Jamun tree') documented in Ashoka's 3rd-century BCE edicts.
- Bharata / Bharatavarsha: Stemming from the Bharata tribe and King Bharata; formalised in the Vishnu Purana as the subcontinent between the Himalayas and the ocean.
- Hindu & Hindustan: Linguistic shift from Sindhu to Hindu by Persians; expanded to 'Hindustan'

in 3rd-century CE Sasanian inscriptions and popularised in medieval times.

- Indoi & India: Greek derivation from Hindush, transformed via Latin into 'India' for international legal and global usage.

2. Analyse the implications of the name 'Bharatavarsha' and how it reflects the cultural identity of the Indian subcontinent.

Ans: The name 'Bharatavarsha' conceptualised the subcontinent as an integrated territorial and civilisational entity. The Vishnu Purana explicitly delineates its geography: north of the ocean and south of the snowy Himalayas. It signified a unified realm governed by shared cultural norms and Dharma, viewing all inhabitants as 'Bharati' regardless of local regional differences.

3. Examine how the names given to India by foreign cultures reflect their perspective and understanding of the region.

Ans: Foreign appellations reveal how external societies interacted with India:

- Persians and Greeks approached via the northwestern boundary of the River Indus (Sindhu), deriving Hindush, Indos, Indoi, and India.
- Chinese travellers (Faxian, Xuanzang) were motivated by Buddhism; they called India Tianzhu ('Sacred Land') or Yindu (symbol of the Moon that illuminates darkness), reflecting their deep spiritual reverence.

4. Justify why the framers of the Indian Constitution chose to refer to India as 'India, that is Bharat'.

Ans: Article 1(1) harmonises national heritage with contemporary statehood:

- 'Bharat' honors the nation's profound historical, philosophical, and civilisational identity spanning thousands of years.
- 'India' preserves legal, institutional, and treaty continuity in modern diplomacy, international affairs, and global bodies like the UN.