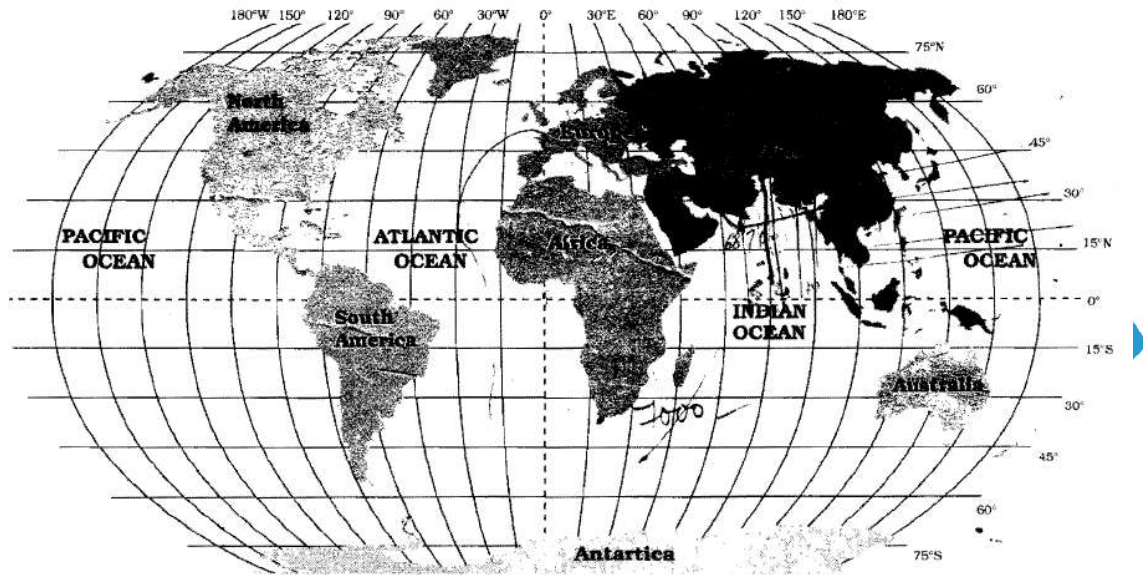


INDIA SIZE & LOCATION

LOCATION

India is a vast country. Lying entirely in the Northern hemisphere (Figure) the main land extends between latitudes $8^{\circ}4'N$ and $37^{\circ}6'N$ and longitudes $68^{\circ}7'E$ and $97^{\circ}25'E$.

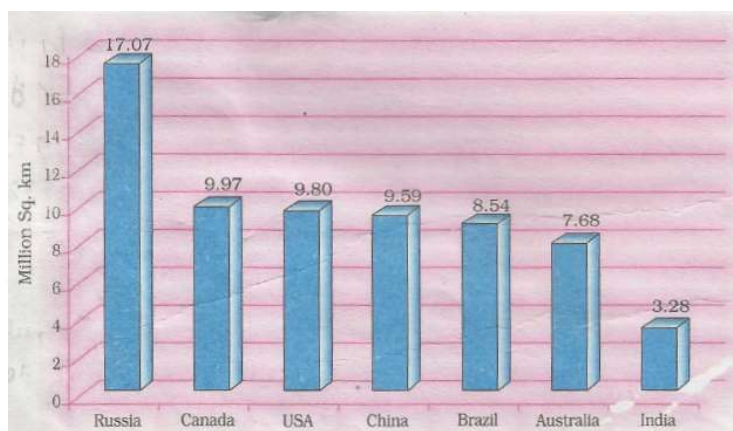


India in the World

The Tropic of Cancer ($23^{\circ} 30'N$) divides the country into almost two equal parts. To the southeast and southwest of the mainland, lie the Andaman and Nicobar islands and the Lakshadweep islands in Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea respectively.

SIZE

The land mass of India has an area of 3.28 million square km. India's total area accounts for about 2.4 per cent of the total geographical area of the world. From the Figure it is clear that India is the seventh largest country of the world. India has a land boundary of about 15,200 km and the total length of the coast line of the mainland including Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep is 7,516.6 km.



Country

- (a) **India has a distinct physical and cultural identity:** Notwithstanding wide diversity, the Indian society has fostered unity and homogeneity. To a large extent this unity and homogeneity has been promoted by the geographical features of the country.

INDIA SIZE & LOCATION

- (i) On its north, India is bounded by lofty mountains. these mountains run east-west for thousands of kilometers. These provide a natural wall against all possible intrusions.
- (ii) On the south, India is surrounded by the seas and the ocean from three sides. It means, the land is protected from outside intrusions.

These geographical features have ensured that:

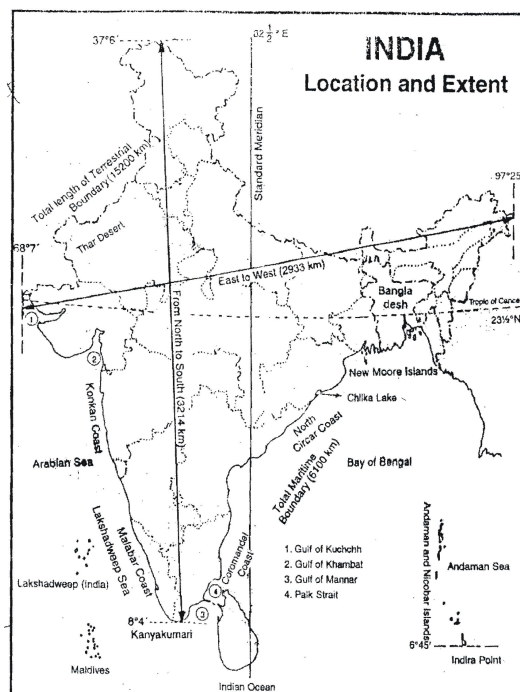
- (i) People from outside could come only through well-defined routes, whether by sea or through passes in mountains.
- (ii) People who came from outside brought with them their cultural elements. These elements came to be assimilated in Indian culture.
- (iii) Indian society adopting new norms.
- (iv) Thus, by adopting new norms and values and accepting them as their own, unity and homogeneity came to be promoted.

- (b) "The north-south extent of India is larger than its east-west extent even through the country's latitudinal and longitudinal extent in degrees is of the same value".

the north-south distance between two successive latitudes remains the same or constant; and it is 3214 km in this case. But the east-west distance between the two successive longitudes goes on progressively decreasing from the equator to the poles. This is because all the meridians merge into a single point at the poles. In India the maximum east-west extent therefore is much less than 3200 km. It is 2933 km only.

- (c) **Impact of the Longitudinal extent of India:** The earth takes 24 hours to complete one rotation (360°) about its axis. It means the earth rotates at the pace of 15 per hour ($360^\circ/24$). As the longitudinal extent of India is about 30° longitude the time lag between easternmost and westernmost points of India is of two hours. When it is 6.00 a.m. at eastern extremity of India it is still 4.00 a.m. at the westernmost point of India. To avoid this time confusion, time along the Standard Meridian of India ($82^\circ 30' E$) passing through Mirzapur (in Uttar Pradesh) is taken as the standard time for the whole country. The latitude with an odd value of $82^\circ 30' E$ has been selected as the Standard Meridian of India as -

- (i) It is well divisible by $7^\circ 30'$, a standard adopted by almost all the countries of the world.
- (ii) It lies almost in the middle of India, and as such, it suits us the most.



Location & Extent in India

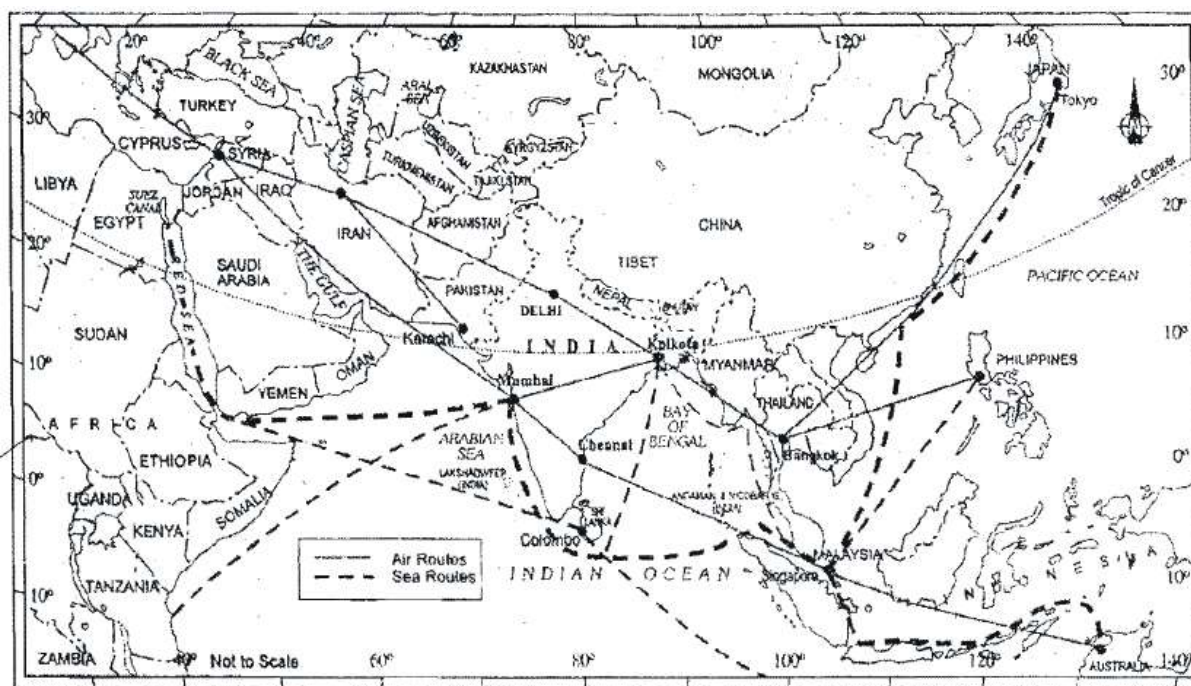
INDIA SIZE & LOCATION

- (d) **Impact of the Latitudinal extent of India:** Kanyakumari is situated near Equator. Here days and nights are almost equal, the maximum difference is 45 minutes only. But as we move farther towards north or south of the Equator, the difference between the length of the day and night becomes progressively larger. In North Kashmir it is as much as 5 hours, as it is far away from the equator.

INDIA AND THE WORLD

(a) **Significance of India's Location:**

- (i) Very thickly populated parts of the world such as China, Japan and Southeast Asia lie very close to India. This has helped in developing trade and other relations with them.
- (ii) The oil rich countries of the Persian Gulf are not far from us. We receive bulk of our supplies from them.
- (iii) Being at the head of the Indian Ocean, the country occupies a strategic position and commercially favourable location in respect of Africa, Asia and Australia.
- (iv) The Suez sea-route provides us the shortest route to industrial Europe and America.
- (v) The busy air routes pass through India connecting east, South East Asia and Australia on the one hand and Europe and America on the other.
- (vi) The third largest ocean in the world came to be known as the Indian Ocean because the subcontinent of India stands at the head of this ocean. India was the favourite destination of the traders of the world.



India on International Highway of Trade and Commerce

(b) **India's Contacts with the Outside World in Ancient and Medieval Times:**

India belongs to the Eastern Hemisphere, which contains the oriental world. In ancient times, the sea played an important role in determining the nature of interaction. The central location of India at the head of the Indian Ocean was of great advantage. Countries of East Africa, West Asia, South and South East Asia, and East Asia could be reached through sea routes. Hence, India established close cultural and commercial contacts with these countries.

India's contacts with the outside world have continued through the ages:

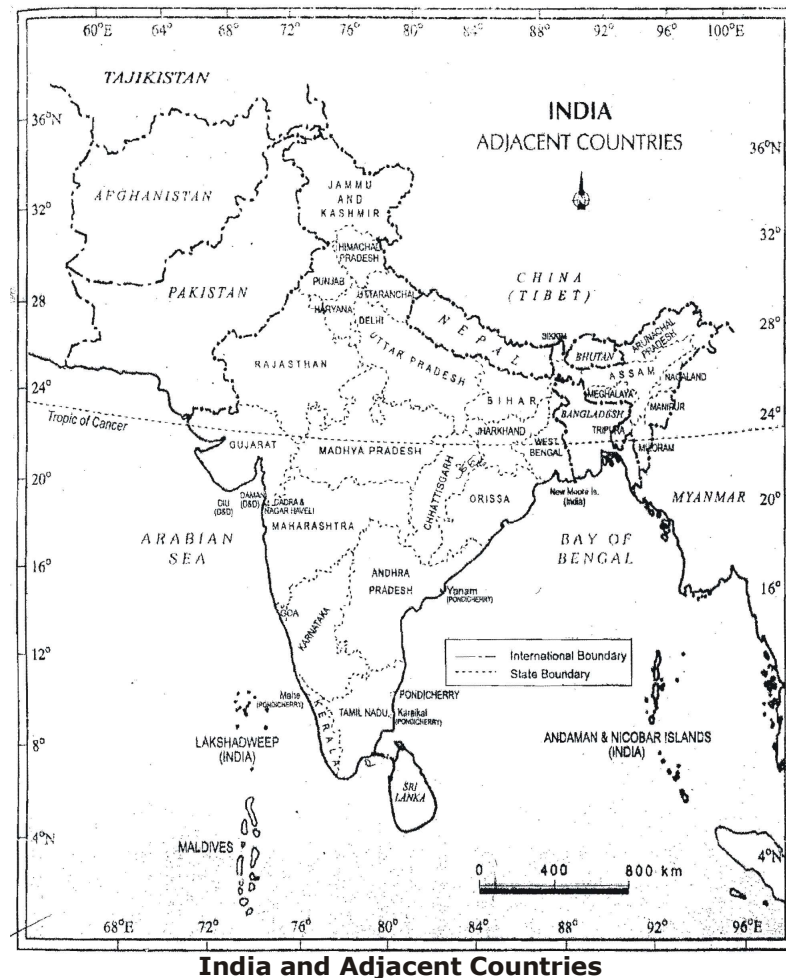
- (i) The exchange of ideas and commodities dates back to the ancient times.
- (ii) The ideas of the Upanishads, and the Ramayana the stories of Panchatantras, the Indian numerals and the decimal system could reach many parts of the world.
- (iii) The spices, muslin and other Indian goods were taken to different countries.
- (iv) The influence of Greek sculpture, and the architectural styles of dome and minarets from West Asia can be seen in India.

INDIA'S NEIGHBOURS

To the north of India are China, Nepal and Bhutan, and to the east Bangladesh and Myanmar, To the west and northwest are Pakistan and Afghanistan. In the south, separated from India by the Palk Strait, lies the island country of Sri Lanka. To the south of Lakshadweep lies Maldives. Not far from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands lie our closest South-East Asian neighbours: Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand.

The Indian Subcontinent:

India is called a subcontinent because of its vastness and distinct physical and cultural identity. The countries that form the Indian subcontinent are Pakistan in the northwest, India at the core, Nepal in the north, Bhutan in the northeast and Bangladesh in the east.



SOME INTERESTING KNOWLEDGE

- (i) The southernmost point of the Indian Union 'Indira Point' got submerged under the sea water in 2004 during the Tsunami.
- (ii) Since the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, India's distance from Europe has been reduced by 7000 km.
- (iii) Before 1947, there were two types of states in India -the provinces and the Princely states. provinces were ruled directly by British officials who were appointed by the Viceroy. Princely states were ruled by local, hereditary rulers, who acknowledged sovereignty in return for local autonomy.