

Evolution of India from a Geographical Expression to a Nation State

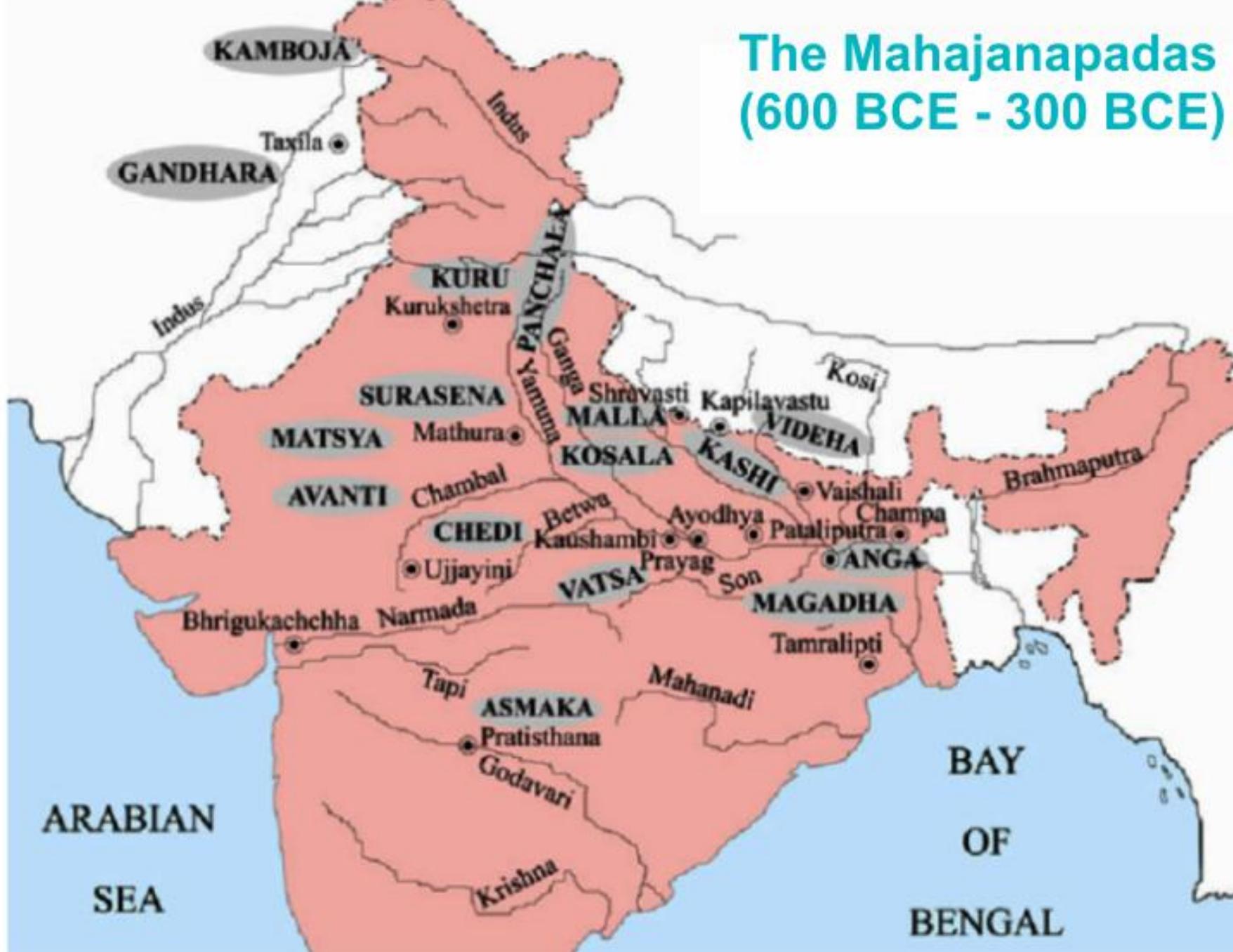
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Source:
<https://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/india/india-political-map.htm>

The Mahajanapadas (600 BCE - 300 BCE)



Ancient Geographers

- Ancient Geographers referred to India as being "constituted with a four-fold conformation" (chatuh samasthana samsthitam), "on its South and West and East is the Great Ocean, the Himavat range stretches along its north like the string of a bow".
- **Bharata Khanda (or Bharata Ksetra)** is a term used in Hindu texts, including the Vedas, Mahabharata, Ramayana and the Puranic, to describe the geographic region that encompassed the modern countries of: Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Myanmar—that is, South Asia at the term's furthest extent.



Bharatvarsha

- ▶ We have been brought up from our early childhood on the idea that the country we live in is **Bharatavarsa** which is India and which is also a map with specific boundaries, separated from other countries with similar maps indicating them.
- ▶ The understanding and unhesitating acceptance of the identity of India and Bharatavarsa was further formalised in the solemn declaration of our constitution: ‘India that is Bharat shall be a union of States’.
- ▶ Since the Indian Constitution came into effect in 1950, India and Bharat have been the two official names of the Republic of India.
- ▶ People in ancient India referred to this country as **Jambudvipa** or the continent of Jambu trees. The Persians referred to our country as the land beyond the river Sindhu, and pronounced it as **Hindu**. The Greeks called it **Inde**, and the Arabs **Hind**.

Different names of India

- **Hodu.** Hodu is the Biblical Hebrew name for India and is mentioned in the Old Testament.
- **Tianzhu.** This is the Chinese and the Japanese name given to India by the Oriental scholars.
- **Nabhivarsha.** Nabhi, was the son of the man who one ruled the entire Earth. As Nabhi ruled India, it came to be known as Nabhivarsha. Nabhi in sanskrit also means the Navel and is the center. If seen on the globe, India appears to be the navel or the center of the Earth.
- **Jambudvipa.** The name literally means 'Land of the Jambu tress'.
- **Aryavarta.** Though not all of India, Aryavarta was the name for the Northern region of India.
- **Hindustan.** A name that is still used, the Persians named India Hind or Hindustan.
- **Bharat.** India is officially called Bharat or the Republic of India and is called so after the Ruler Bharata.
- **India.** The name most popular and the official name of the country.

Background

- ▶ Bharatavarsha, the “land of Bharata”, refers to a legendary king of central northern India, who is praised of as the forefather of the epic dynasties of the Mahabharata.
- ▶ The Rigvedic tribes (janas) were communities without fixed territories.
- ▶ In the subsequent Brahmana texts they were associated with their larger tribal settlements (janapadas).
- ▶ The early Buddhist texts integrated the meanwhile vaguely known separate territories of the subcontinent into their cosmographic concept of Jambudvipa.

Connotation of Bharatavarsha

- ▶ A person could declare himself as from Magadha, Kosala, Dravida, or Kaunkana or Avanti, or be hailed as coming from Gandhara, Kuru or Madra, but never as from Bharatavarsha. Thus, Bharatavarsha, without its janapadas, would not have made much sense.
- ▶ The Rigvedic tribes (janas) were communities without fixed territories. In the subsequent Brahmana texts they were associated with their larger tribal settlements (janapadas).
- ▶ The notions of “border”, “frontier”, or “foreigner”, being absent in the connotation of Bharatavarsha

Description of Bharatvarsha

- ▶ In fact, Bharatavarsa figured as a key component in an elaborate in the Puranas also, the textual evidence that we have to turn to understand the structure of the space and its associated characteristics that the term conveyed.
- ▶ The Puranic details, despite their characterization as 'geographical details' do not pertain to the current geography of India.
- ▶ One section of the relevant part of the Purana is devoted to what is called Bharatavarsa-varnanam.- Vishnu Purana
- ▶ Kharavela, the king of Kalinga or coastal Orissa in the first century BC, claimed in his epigraph, to have gone out to conquer Bharadavasa (Bharatavarsa) in his tenth regnal year, it being one of many such expeditions that he undertook.
- ▶ Clearly, Kalinga was not seen as a part of Bharatavarsa when he was ruling.



A geographical expression

- “India is merely a geographical expression,” **Winston Churchill** said in exasperation. “It is no more a single country than the Equator.”
- The founder of Singapore, **Lee Kuan Yew**, echoed that sentiment, arguing that “India is not a real country. Instead it is thirty-two separate nations that happen to be arrayed along the British rail line.”
- Churchill was rarely right about India, but it is true that no other country in the world embraces the extraordinary mixture of ethnic groups, the profusion of mutually incomprehensible languages, the varieties of topography and climate, the diversity of religions and cultural practices, and the range of levels of economic development that India does.
- **Sir John R. Seeley** in his book The Expansion of England writes, “India is only a geographical expression like Europe or Africa. It does not make the territory of a nation and a language, but the territory of many nations and languages

Visnu Puran

- ▶ Book 2 of the Visnu-Purana, with the third adhyaya beginning with the following verse:

***Uttaram yat samudrasya Himadrescaiva daksinam
varsam tad Bharatam nama Bharati yatra santatih***

- ▶ A literal translation of the verse would be:

That varsa which lies to the north of the ocean and to the south of the snowy mountain, is called Bharata, where the progeny is called Bharati.

- ▶ To cite a verse from the Visnu-Purana:

On the east (Purve) of Bharata dwell the Kiratas . . . on the west (Pascime) Yavanas; in the centre (madhye bhagasah) reside Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras, occupied in their respective duties of sacrifice, arms, trade, and service.



India and its contradictions

- ▶ And yet India is more than the sum of its contradictions. It is a country held together, in the words of its first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, "by strong but invisible threads.... About her there is the elusive quality of a legend of long ago; some enchantment seems to have held her mind. She is a myth and an idea, a dream and a vision, and yet very real and present and pervasive."
- ▶ How can one approach this land of snow peaks and tropical jungles, with twenty-two Scheduled Languages in its Constitution, and twenty-two thousand distinct dialects (including some spoken by more people than speak Danish or Norwegian), inhabited in the last decade of the twentieth century by nearly 940 million individuals of every ethnic extraction known to humanity?

Not a geographical Unit

- ▶ It is obvious that Bharatavarsa was not perceived as a well-defined geographical entity by itself.
- ▶ From what appears to be the earliest reference available so far, Bharatavarsa was a part of what it became later, perhaps corresponding to the janapada of the Bharatas, as were Kuru, Kosala, Magadha, Vatsa and many others.
- ▶ In fact, it was the term janapada and not Bharatavarsa which defined the habitats of different communities, and with an expansion in the meaning of Bharatavarsa, individual janapadas became different spatio-social components of it.



How do we come to terms

- ▶ How does one come to terms with a country whose population is 51 percent illiterate, but which has educated the world's second largest pool of trained scientists and engineers, whose teeming cities overflow while four out of five Indians scratch a living from the soil?
- ▶ What is the clue to understanding a country rife with despair and disrepair, which nonetheless moved a Mughal emperor to declaim, "If on earth there be paradise of bliss, it is this, it is this, it is this ...?"
- ▶ How does one gauge a culture that elevated nonviolence to an effective moral principle, but whose freedom was born in blood and whose independence still soaks in it?
- ▶ How does one explain a land where peasant organizations and suspicious officials attempt to close down Kentucky Fried Chicken as a threat to the nation, where a former prime minister bitterly criticizes the sale of Pepsi-Cola "in a country where villagers don't have clean drinking water," and which yet invents a greater quantity of sophisticated software for U.S. computer manufacturers than any other country in the world?
- ▶ How can one portray the present, let alone the future, of an ageless civilization that was the birthplace of four major religions, a dozen different traditions of classical dance, eighty-five political parties, and three hundred ways of cooking the potato?



Emergence of State and Nation

- ▶ Human society has existed for a long time, but emergence of state and nation has changed the way societies lived and progressed.
- ▶ Historically the emergence of state societies was a unique and revolutionary phenomenon.
- ▶ There were stateless societies at some point of time in the world. India too had stateless societies. Existence of state is generally associated with the nation.
- ▶ It is an erroneous understanding to assume that state and nation are the same. The difference between a state and a nation is that while the former refers primarily to a territorial entity, the latter is a 'feeling' of collectivity that is abstract and involves a vision of unity of culture, historical past and ethnic roots.
- ▶ The transition from stateless to state societies in India did not coincide with the emergence of nation-state



How do you understand a State

- ▶ A State is a politically organised territory, administered by a Government and recognised by an International Community.
- ▶ A Nation is a tightly knit group of people possessing bonds of shared religion, ethnicity, language and cultural attributes.
- ▶ A Nation State is a recognised country possessing formal sovereignty, occupied by people who see themselves as a single unit .



Stateless society

- ▶ Stateless societies are defined in terms of the absence of any centralised political structure implying that there is no formal agency of social control as you find them in contemporary societies.
- ▶ The ties of kinship and lineage system guide the political order of stateless societies.
- ▶ State societies emerged with the Agricultural Revolution, as states are made possible only if there is a surplus generated that can support a non-producing elite.
- ▶ Pre-agricultural societies did not produce a surplus as they did not have any stratification to demand the production of a surplus.
- ▶ Even when the agricultural transition was made, most parts of India continued as non-state, kinship and community-based societies, where land is not owned and there is no well- developed concept of property and of land revenue



Two views

Scholars have two views on the link of agriculture, surplus production and state formation. One view that was classically held by scholars such as **Gordon Childe**, consider the technological advancement as the trigger for the emergence of urban civilization and state formation.

The other view primarily led by scholars such as **Ester Boserup** have put primacy to hierarchy and the need to pay rent as the push that led towards technological revolution and people had no option but to look for ways to create surplus to pay tribute.

Indus Valley civilization

- ▶ The history of the beginning of civilisation in Indian subcontinent starts with Indus Valley Civilisation which is also known as Harappan Civilisation.
- ▶ Scholars have argued that there existed uniformity in this civilisation in terms of the construction of its cities. This has compelled them to conclude that there existed a central political authority implying that it was not a stateless society.
- ▶ Fortification, which is one of the constituent elements of state, is also found in some of the cities of Indus Valley Civilisation such as Dholavira in Gujarat.
- ▶ Depiction of a soldier on a pottery shard suggests that Indus civilisation had a standing army.

Vedic and later Vedic period

- ▶ The Vedic society was primarily pastoral-nomadic. Agriculture was marginal at first, and became increasingly central in the Later Vedic period.
- ▶ It was primarily guided by lineage system.
- ▶ The sociological classification of stateless societies makes it evident that kinship and lineage are central features guiding the political organisation of stateless societies.
- ▶ It is argued that “characteristics of the lineage system do appear to be recognizable in much of what we know of Vedic society”
- ▶ You will not find a state structure emerging in this society until later Rigvedic period.
- ▶ The period between early Rigvedic to later Rigvedic time saw the fourfold division of society on the basis of caste. “In the Indian situation lineage society gave shape and form to caste structure. Lineage elements such as kinship and marriage rules are important to caste.
- ▶ When differing forms of stratification begin to emerge an attempt is made through the varna framework to draw them together into a holistic theory of social functioning.
- ▶ In the later stage the occupational groups employed in production, the sudras, are added on as a fourth category but denied a lineage origin form, so that their exclusion is made explicit

Stateless society to state society

- ▶ The transition from stateless society to state society takes places at a particular juncture in Indian history.
- ▶ It happened at point when the agricultural production and social relations in society reached a stage where producing agricultural surplus was possible and a standing army could be maintained.
- ▶ The period depicted in the Mahabharata, that is dated to around 1st century AD, shows that some small feudal kingdoms were emerging.
- ▶ Arthashastra of Kautilya, which is described as one of the significant texts to understand the nature of state in ancient India, lists seven constituent elements of States – king (sovereign power), ministers, people, fortified city, treasury and the army.

Use of iron and rice cultivation

- ▶ Historians have argued that the use of iron coupled with rice cultivation was significant in this transition from stateless to state societies in ancient India.
- ▶ Therefore, you will find that Ganga Valley was the place where the first republics of ancient India developed which is called gana sanghas.
- ▶ The presence of a perennial and large source of water has been seen as the prime requisite for the emergence of state and urban civilizations.
- ▶ Thus the cradle of urban civilization was Mesopotamia on the banks of the Euphrates and the Tigris rivers and the Indus river and its tributaries the site of the Indus valley or Harrapan Civilization.
- ▶ The Doab, or the flat plains watered by the Ganga and the Yamuna in Northern Peninsular India provided the ecological conditions necessary for cultivation and surplus production.

Republics and Monarchies

- ▶ The republics developed alongside monarchies. So, two state systems developed at this time – gana sanghas and monarchies.
- ▶ This is where the first empire of India i.e. Magadha, emerged. This transition from pre-state or lineage society to state took place around 1000-600 BCE in the mid Ganga Valley.
- ▶ Buddhist scriptures explain the history of social organisation of this period.
- ▶ Both Gana sanghas and monarchies had different form of social organisation. Varna structure was prominent in monarchies whereas gana sanghas find no role of varna structure, but of clans and lineage.
- ▶ Cities like Kausambi, Vaisali, Rajagriha, appear during this period.



Sixteen Mahajan padas

- ▶ All these transformations in social organisation and state systems was possible because of the increased agricultural production which provided the base for the appearance of cities, states and complex class society.
- ▶ The establishment of sixteen Mahajanapadas along with their capital cities and standing armies could not be achieved if agricultural surplus was not produced.
- ▶ This was all the more difficult if the caste system had not divided the labour but also labourers.



Maurya's and Guptas

- ▶ The consolidation of Mauryan Empire under Ashoka's regime is compelling story of these factors.
- ▶ However, the idea of nation-state was still absent at a time when consolidation of empires was taking place in ancient India.
- ▶ Similarly the rise of Gupta empire did not mean that India as a nation-state existed.
- ▶ There is no doubt that these empires had huge centralised administrative and bureaucratic structures and have acquired territories through regular conquests,
- ▶ But the kind of political and economic consolidation brought out by British colonialism was unparalleled in Indian history.
- ▶ Till that time India as a nation state was non-existent



Stateless to state societies

- ▶ Some Historians argue that
- ▶ The transition from a stateless to state societies in India did not coincide with the emergence of nation-state.
- ▶ For a long time India had state formations in which the idea of Indian nation-state was not present.
- ▶ It was at a particular period in Indian history that the idea of India as a unified nation-state took shape.
- ▶ It was during British colonial rule and struggle against it that this idea germinated.



British Colonial rule

- ▶ It was during colonial rule and struggle against it that the idea of India as a nation got strengthened.
- ▶ British colonials ruled in two ways – first direct rule in some states and secondly there were around six hundred princely states which were primarily autocratic monarchies.
- ▶ The colonial governance and anti-colonial struggle has shaped much of the political processes of contemporary India.



Second world war

- ▶ The Second World War also contributed to the emergence of what today we recognise as nation-states. The War initiated feelings of belonging, marked by redefined territories, ethnic and cultural identities.
- ▶ Overall, the idea of nation-states and nationalism intensified the desire for war during the World Wars by fueling competition, territorial ambitions, aggressive ideologies, and a heightened sense of national identity and loyalty, often resulting in devastating conflicts on a global scale.

Oommen's argument

- ▶ Oommen argues that the essential unity of India has been defined in several ways, in terms of (i) an ancient civilisational entity; (ii) a composite culture; (iii) a multi-national polity; (iv) a religious entity; (v) a territorial entity populated by a multiplicity of religious communities; (vi) a geographical/collectivity of linguistic communities; and finally (vii) as a unity of great and little nationalisms.
- ▶ In these seven ways of defining India as a nation, two important elements – political and economic are missing which were specific to the colonisation due to which India could emerge as a nation.
- ▶ Oommen, T.K. (2003). 'Demystifying the Nation and Nationalism', *India International Centre Quarterly*, Vol.29, No.3/4, pp.259-274.



Emerging India :Why is India Significant?

- ▶ Largest functional Democracy in the World
- ▶ A de facto Nuclear Weapon State
- ▶ One of the fastest Growing Economies in the World, with very positive macro level indicators
- ▶ The third largest Army
- ▶ Second largest populous country
- ▶ World's largest pool of Scientists and Engineers after US
- ▶ Seventh largest industrial economy in the world (Third largest economy in terms of purchasing power parity)



India as a Nation state today

- ▶ Today when we refer to India, we think of it as a nation-state, consisting of twenty nine states and seven union territories. There is clearly a specified Indian territory ruled by Indian State.
- ▶ It has a flag, national anthem, constitution and codified legal norms and rights for its citizens.
- ▶ The territorial boundaries of India were drawn after 1947 according to the map of British conquest, but not necessarily according to any historical sense of belongingness, cultural identity or ethnic roots. In this scenario one is bound to ask the question as to what is this entity called India and more importantly who does it represent and who feel that they belong to it.
- ▶ For the many people of India, primordial ties of caste, clan, community and religion often override the sense of belonging to the abstract entity of the Indian Nation.

Political Unification

- ▶ one of the significant results of the British conquest of India was the establishment of a centralised state which brought about, for the first time in Indian history, a real and basic political and administrative unification of the country .
- ▶ Such a unity was unknown in pre-British India, which was, almost chronically, divided into numerous feudal states, frequently struggling among themselves to extend their boundaries.
- ▶ It is true that attempts were made by outstanding monarchs like Ashoka, Samudragupta and Akbar, to bring the whole of India under a single state regime and administrative system.
- ▶ However, even when they succeeded in bringing a greater portion of India under their rule, the political and administrative unity achieved was of a nominal character only.



Legal Unification

- ▶ The British established a uniform reign of law in the country. They enacted laws and codified them. These laws were applicable to every citizen of the state and were enforced by a hierarchically graded system of tribunals which constituted the judicial section of the State.
- ▶ Alongside, an education system necessary to maintain the new economic and administrative apparatus was introduced by the British.
- ▶ The British also brought about the administrative unification of India. The hierarchically graded public services, established by the British, is an example of that. The Indian people, for the first time, found a substantial sector of their economic and social life coming under the governance of a universally and equally operating system of law.
- ▶ The British government created a new land system on a private property basis and introduced money economy. A uniform system of law had to be evolved to maintain and regulate the new land relations and various contractual transactions such as purchase, sale, and mortgage of land resulting inevitably from the new system.

Economic Unification

- ▶ The capitalist economic transformation of India broke up the multitude of separate village economies, welded the Indian people economically, through a system of exchange relations, and made contract the key basis of their economic relations.
- ▶ The commercial crops which were grown mainly for the market not for one's own consumption were introduced in large: commodity products such as sugarcane, tea, coffee, jute, rubber etc. The commercialisation of agriculture meant that India was linked to the wider world market.
- ▶ Both the internal and foreign trade of India increased in volume and scope.
- ▶ The new state had to enact a mass of laws to regulate the huge complex of contractual and other relations inevitably arising from such an economic state. Thus there came into existence a system of new laws, uniformly operating and governing all complex and multi-fold relations and transactions between the tenants and landlords, workers and employers, manufacturers, traders and bankers; also laws determining the relations of India with other countries regarding perennially operating trade and other activities
- ▶ Accordingly a uniform currency system was also introduced.

Land Relations

- ▶ The kind of changes British colonials introduced in land relations was also significant. Pre-colonial India had no class of landed feudal nobility with 42 Ideas of India proprietary rights over land.
- ▶ The feudal nobility which existed throughout the pre-British period was given only the right to collect and appropriate land revenue over a specific number of villages. The nobility was not the owner of these villages but only the revenue collector keeping the whole or a portion of the land revenue. The institution of manor never existed in the pre-British Indian society.
Similarly, it was also not the monarch who was the owner of the agricultural land of the realm. The monarch or the state had a right only to receive a definite proportion of the produce.
- ▶ At the same time the individual peasant proprietorship over land did not exist in pre-British India. This implies that the private ownership of land was non-existent. Village possessed the right over land and that is why village was the unit of revenue assessment. This continued in Mogul India.
- ▶ The political principles of Mughal Empire were governed by distinct traditions giving rise to highly centralised bureaucratic structure. The system of nobles' distribution of ranks called mansabdari and system of distribution of land grants i.e. jagirdari were its prominent structures. But they could not introduce private ownership of land.



Private ownership of land

- ▶ It was after the emergence of colonial powers in Indian subcontinent private ownership of land was introduced.
- ▶ The British conquest of India led to a revolution in the existing land system. The new revenue system introduced by the British in India superseded the traditional right of the village community over the village land and created two forms of property in land; landlordism in some parts of the country and the individual peasant proprietorship in others.
- ▶ These changes were unprecedented in Indian history. From the point of view of administration, it was more economical for the British to collect revenue from thousands of landlords than from a legion of small peasant proprietors. For political-strategic reason, the young British Raj in India needed a social support in the country to maintain itself. It was expected that the new class of landlords, which owed its existence to the British rule, would naturally support it
- ▶ These changes in land relations had far reaching impact on the consolidation of India as a nation.

Geographical Elements of Unity in Diversity

- ▶ India has diverse geography. At broadest level, the country can be divided into several regions viz. Himalaya, northern plains, plateau of central India and Deccan, Western & Eastern Ghats, Thar Desert etc. Each of them has different climate, temperature, vegetation, fauna, people and so on.
- ▶ Despite of this diversity, India has been defined as a distinct geographical unit since ages. A sloka in *Vishnu Purana* defines *Bharata* as *the land which is south of snowy mountains and north of ocean*.
- ▶ The country was time and again unified by different imperialist forces taking into consideration its geographical distinctness. There was a time two kings were known as *Uttarapathapathi* {Harsha} and *Dakshinapathapathi* {Pulkeshin}, thus giving a notion of only two parts of this vast country.
- ▶ The medieval sultans and mughals tried to consolidate their empire from north to south, geographically. British also did the same.



Notion of India as a country

- ▶ The people of India did have a vague conception of India as a country some two thousand and five hundred years ago.
- ▶ Thereafter, in stages, as their knowledge about themselves and others grew, they began to identify the cultural features that were common to them, and to recognise a unity in the diversity of their religions and languages.
- ▶ But it was their resistance to colonialism and absorption of modern democratic (and later socialist) ideas that began to transform India from a country – a geographical and cultural entity – into a nation-state



Drawbacks

- ▶ British came with their own version of civilisation. Their vision of a civilised Nation, State and Society country was of individual and strong men who owned their own property and supported their families of women and children.
- ▶ Under community ownership, both men and women had rights of access to resources and neither had ownership but with British legislation all land and resources passed into the hands of men.
- ▶ They also supported the hierarchical and feudal system and were patrons of upper castes and landholders.
- ▶ The 'lower' castes, tribes and the landless and poor were even further marginalised and their lower position justified in many ways.
- ▶ Thus when the Indian Nation was born, it was typically Hindu, Brahmanical and upper class. This mainstream excluded the lower caste/class, women, tribes and several other categories, who are, even as of today, struggling to find an identity with and within the nation state.



Consolidation of the country

- ▶ After the transfer of power from British colonials to Indian rulers that took place in 1947, the consolidation of the country was carried out consciously.
- ▶ Many of the princely states were merged with the Indian union to achieve the political homogeneity throughout the country.
- ▶ The territorial integration of princely States took three forms – (a) merger with the adjacent provinces; (b) grouping of certain States into separate units; (c) transformation of certain States into centrally administered areas.
- ▶ The process through which the states were adjusted into the new constitutional structure was two-fold. It involved, in the first place, the accession of the Indian States to the Dominion of India. Secondly, it involved the changes whereby the consolidation of small States into viable administrative units had taken place”

Privy Purse

- ▶ The erstwhile rulers were initially granted a Privy Purse, a compensation for having willingly handed over their estates to the nation.
- ▶ Later during her rule, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi abolished this system, under the justification that these rulers did not deserve to be supported by the state as they were like any other citizen of this country.



Objectives after Independence

- Ever since independence in 1947, India has had three geopolitical objectives. Two are common to all nation-states: security and prosperity.
- India must physically protect the country and its 1.3 billion citizens.
- The South Asian nation also aims to lift many of those people out of poverty and to create a modern, wealthy society.



Indian Nation's progress

- ▶ The Indian nation has been on a path of consolidation and developing a unified identity.
- ▶ Some national institutions like the Armed Forces, the National Stock Exchange, the Election Commission, the Parliament and the Supreme Court, among others, are looked upon as representatives of the nation-state.
- ▶ Yet regionalism, communalism, divisive politics and stark economic disparities work against the emergence of a strongly unified state.
- ▶ Further, the homogenising effects of cultural globalisation and the global flow of goods and information are diluting the unifying forces that hold the nation together.

Planned economy

- ▶ India was still a geographic expression and a nation in making.
- ▶ Other than the spirit of the freedom struggle, factors required for binding the people were few.
- ▶ So the then politicians and think tanks opted for a planned economy and a centralized planning body to formulate a plan for socio-economic development.
- ▶ Thus, planning commission came into existence in March 1950 through a cabinet resolution which became a permanent body of experts.

The Planning Commission

- The Planning Commission of India was set up by a Resolution of the Government of India in March 1950.
- Objectives of the government while starting PC were the following:
 - Promote a rapid rise in the standard of living of the people by efficient exploitation of the resources of the country.
 - Increase production.
 - Offer opportunities to all for employment in the service of the community.

Drawbacks of the Planning

- ▶ No structural mechanism for regular engagement with states.
- ▶ Ineffective forum for the resolution of centre-state and inter-ministerial issues.
- ▶ Inadequate capacity expertise and domain knowledge; weak networks with think tanks and lack of access to expertise outside government.
- ▶ Failed to implement land reforms.
- ▶ It was a toothless body, was not able to make union/states/UTs answerable for not achieving the targets.
- ▶ Designed plans with 'one size fit for all' approach. Hence, many plans failed to show tangible results.
- ▶ Weak implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

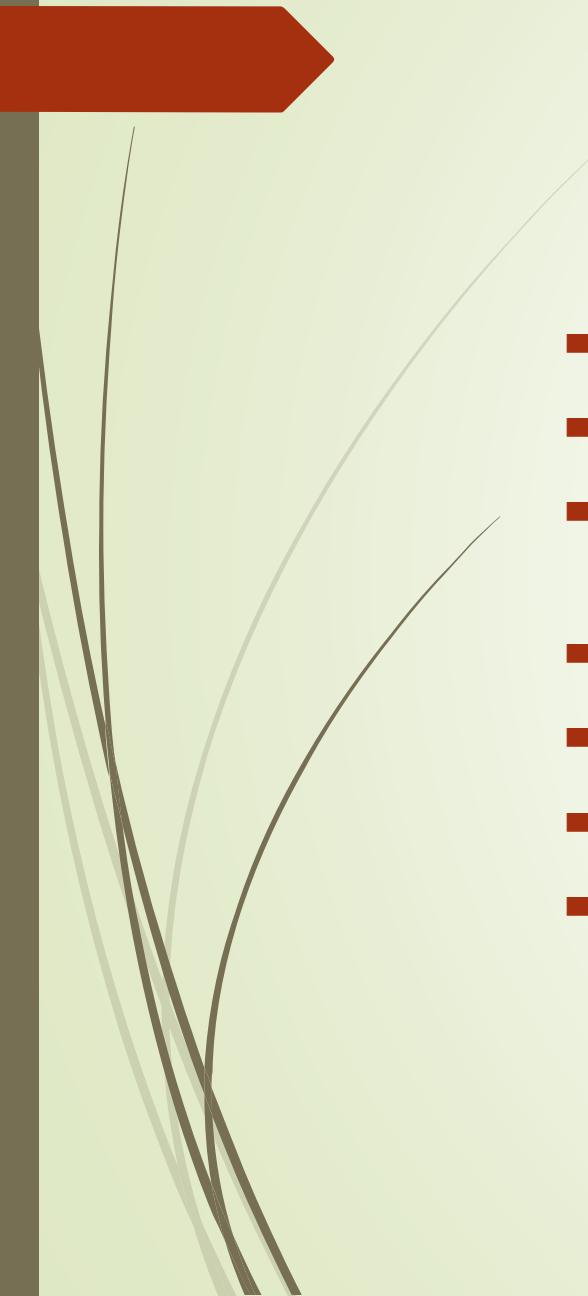
Expansion

- The contemporary world is governed by constitutional ethos like federalism rather than centralisation.
- India's population has almost tripled to 140 Cr, and many of the Indian states are as big as European nations.
- Indian economy has expanded from a GDP of 10,000 crore to 100 lakh crore (at current prices) – ie. from a poor nation to one of the largest economies. India ranks 3rd in GDP at purchasing power parity, has surpassed Japan and is now standing just below the US and China. The new economy needs institutions which can take India forward in a global competitive environment.
- Co-operative federalism and fiscal federalism will help to meet the diverse needs of different states/UTs in which planning commission had failed drastically. Plans have to be formulated by fulfilling the aspirations of states by tailoring the plans to suit their needs and requirements.



Why does India need to change the Planning Commission

- ▶ The share of agriculture in GDP has been drastically decreasing while the share of the service sector to GDP is increasing in India.
- ▶ From 1991, as our economy is liberalised, private firms have been playing a major role in the economy.
- ▶ Today we are living in a globalised world connected by modern transport, media, communications and networked international institutions and markets.
- ▶ With the increasing levels of development, the aspirations of people have soared from survival to safety and surplus. So governance systems need to be transformed to keep up with the same.
- ▶ Change in the economic scenario where the government is supposed to be an enabler rather than a player or provider of first and last. PS: In the next article, let's see how the new institution, NITI Aayog can change the face of Indian Planning.



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- ▶ The third largest Army
- ▶ Second largest populous country
- ▶ World's largest pool of Scientists and Engineers after US
- ▶ Seventh largest industrial economy in the world (Third largest economy in terms of purchasing power parity)



Emerging India and Evolution of Its External Engagements.

- ▶ Foreign Policy of India under British Rule
- ▶ Foreign Policy of India since Independence - Four Phases
 - 1947-1962
 - 1962-1991
 - 1991- 2013
 - 2014- Till Present

Foreign Policy

India's Foreign Policy under British Rule

- ▶ Quasi International Entity
- ▶ Indian National Congress - Articulator of India's Foreign Policy

India since Independence - Three Phases

First Phase:1947-1962

- ▶ Phase of Ideological Projection/ idealism
- ▶ Emphasis on Non-alignment
- ▶ Global Disarmament

Second Phase:1962-1991

- ▶ Non-alignment Questioned
- ▶ Emphasis on National Security

Foreign Policy

Third Phase: 1991- 1913

- ▶ Economic Reforms- de-emphasis on Non-alignment
- ▶ Multi-directional engagement with major powers (US, EU, Japan)
- ▶ Blazing new trails (With South Africa, Israel)
- ▶ New dynamism in regionalism
(BRICS, IBSA, IOR-ARC, BIMSTEC, SCO, SAFTA and so on)

Fourth Phase: 2014 till present – Continuity and change

- ▶ India's foreign policy shifted from non-alignment towards "**multi-alignment**," characterized by a more assertive, pragmatic, and development-focused approach.
- ▶ deepening ties with the West (US, Europe) while balancing traditional partners like Russia, emphasizing strategic autonomy, and focusing on "**Neighbourhood First**" and "**Act East**" policies.
- ▶ using "smart power" (cultural/tech diplomacy) to build influence and counter China's growing assertiveness.



The Cold War period

- ▶ Lack of influence in UN and other International Institutions
- ▶ Technological Denial regimes
- ▶ Economic Isolation
- ▶ Emphasis on soft power rather than on hard power

Emerging India: The Changing Global Balance of Power

Background

- ▶ End of Cold War, End of Political Binaries at the global level
- ▶ Change in the architecture of global power (Unipolarity to multipolarity)
- ▶ Rapid expansion of globalisation and subsequent marketisation of economies of Third World
- ▶ The shift in world's economic centre of gravity from Atlantic to Asia
- ▶ Increasing degree of regionalization
- ▶ Nuclearisation of South Asian States
- ▶ Domestic Factors: Not so positive results from the planning processes - Initiation of economic reforms, consensus on economic reforms among major political parties.

Emerging India: Positive Aspects

Economic

- ▶ Growing Economy (Annual Growth rate of GDP))
- ▶ Healthy Macro-level economic and social indicators (Low inflation, Per capita, Reduction in Poverty rate, Literacy rate, urban infrastructure, etc)

Political

- ▶ Centrality of democracy (Success of Parliamentary Democracy)
- ▶ Emphasis on Secularism
- ▶ Advanced National Security Infrastructure

Social

A Multi-cultural Society

Emerging India: Positive Aspects

► Demographic

- Young Population
- Population Window
- Diaspora
- Improved Human resources (Technical and Language Skills)

Cultural

- Media (Expansion of print, visual and social media)
- Entertainment Industry (Expansion of productions of movies, music, television programme, etc)

India: An Emerging Power: Challenges

- ▶ Economic – Lack of economic inclusiveness, slow process of structural and financial reforms, increased focus on service sector
- ▶ Political and Social – Not so inclusive society
- ▶ Issues of governance (competence, efficiency, accountability)

In addition to these, there are unresolved issues and conflicts involving India and South Asian Neighbours



Major Redefined Premises of India's External engagements since the 1990s

- ▶ Shifts in the practice of non-alignment;
- ▶ Multi-directional engagement of all major powers;
- ▶ Opening up new pathways; and
- ▶ Renewed dynamism in regional grouping



Unity in Diversity

- ▶ The most often noticed feature of Indian society is “Unity in Diversity”. This phrase celebrates how India has been stronger by welcoming various cultural, social and ethnic elements. It also transcends the notion *accommodation without assimilation* has been the key feature of Indian civilization. India has accommodated different elements of society without letting them lose their separate identity. We have got enough freedom to practice our own way of life.
- ▶ We note that Unity in Diversity is not something unique to India only. This concept is a popular motto in most nations, and it has also provided backbone to several political and social movements around the world.
- ▶ Its core idea is “unity without uniformity” and “diversity without fragmentation”. It is based on the notion that diversity enriches human interaction.

Religious Elements of Unity in Diversity

- ▶ India has multitude of religions including majority Hinduism and minority Islam, Sikhism, Christianity, Buddhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Bahá'í Faith and so on.
- ▶ The religious diversity has been one of the main divisive force in the country leading to problem of communalism, yet this diversity has many a times kept the country united in difficult times.
- ▶ Religious unity is particularly visible when a war or a disaster happens. Time and again, India has stood united in crisis, and that is what religious unity in diversity of India is.
- ▶ This apart, we see everyday examples of religious harmony such as use of *Ganapati Pandal* as a makeshift mosque for Muslims; and Hindus participating in Eid festivities . Sikhs building mosques for Muslims; Muslims kids robed as Krishna for Janmasthmi festivals and so on.
- ▶ There are some religious centres in the country {Ajmer Sharif, Bodhgaya, Golden Temple in Amritsar etc.} which have acquired a character that goes beyond one religion.

Cultural Elements of Unity in Diversity

- ▶ The Cultural unity in diversity of India is generally denoted with the phrase “Ganga-Jamuni Tahjeeb” or India’s composite culture.
- ▶ Despite of diversity, there are numerous cultural elements and factors that have shaped India’s composite culture.
- ▶ Most important of these are , music, daily life, literature.

Indian Music

- ▶ The best example of India's composite culture is our music, particularly the Hindustani Classical Music.
- ▶ It has ancient origins, yet emergence of a highly developed and enriched music of northern India could not have been possible without Muslim contributions and its patronage.
- ▶ Emergence of Khayal from Dhrupad, Tabla from Pakhawaj / Mridangam are some of the key examples.
- ▶ Indian Veena and Persian Tambura merged to emerge as Sitar.
- ▶ Similarly, Ghazals and Qawwalis have played a unifying factor between the people of Indian sub-continent.
- ▶ Bollywood film industry also plays a major role.



Daily Life

- ▶ Each religion has influenced other in its customs, manners, rituals, etiquettes, dress, consumes, cooking, fairs, festivals, games, sports and so on.
- ▶ For example, *Nisbat*, *Mehendi*, *Haldi*, *Tel*, *Mandwa*, *Jalwa*, *Barat*, *Kangan* etc. are the Muslim adaptation of Hindu ceremonies.
- ▶ Similarly, when lower Hindu caste people converted to Islam during Sultanate and Mughal era, they kept their livelihood / vocational practices attached to the caste, thus we have Muslim castes as well including *Julahas*, *Ansaris* and so on.

Literature

- ▶ Different regions of India contributed to the promotion of literature and higher learning to the composite culture of India.
- ▶ For example, Vedas were developed in North-West {Sapta-Sindhu region}, Yajurveda and Brahmana in Kuru-Panchal region; Rajatarangini in Kashmir; Upanishads in Magadha; Gita Govinda in Bengal, Charyapadas in Odisha, West Bengal and Assam; Mahakavyas and dramas of Kalidasa in Ujjaini.
- ▶ Bhavbhut's works in Vidarbha; Dasakumarcharita of Dandin in Deccan; Sangam Literature in South and so on.
- ▶ Similarly, Taxila, Nalanda, Varanasi, Vallabhi, Vanvasi, Amaravati, Nagarjunkonda, Kanchi, Madurai and Odantapuri are shining examples of seats of higher learning in India.

Bhakti and Sufi Movement

- ▶ Bhakti Movement dissolved the separate religious identities to a great extent and provides a great contribution to India's composite culture. It gave a rude shock to Brahmanical influence over Hinduism as well as religious bigotry in Islam. It brought to fore the universal brotherhood, equality and oneness of God while rejected castes, rituals, idol worship etc.
- ▶ Essence of both Bhakti and Sufi movements was that they are not purists. Purism brings bigotry. Both of them brought Hindus and Muslim closer and thus contributing in composite culture of the country.
- ▶ The early Sufi saints laid great emphasis on love and had a pantheistic approach that was inherently in conflict with orthodoxy. Some practices of Sufi saints such as penance, fasting and holding the breath are sometimes traced to the Buddhist and Hindu yogic influences. The Chishti and Suharwardi orders both helped create a climate of opinion where people belonging to different sects and religions could live in harmony.

Political Elements of Unity in Diversity

- ▶ Though it is believed that India's continuity as a civilization was social and cultural rather than political; yet idea of bringing entire country under one central authority has been dream of great kings, sultans, emperors and rulers.
- ▶ This idea was put into practice by Chandragupta; Asoka; Harsha; Akbar and British rulers. Despite this, India was never a well organized political unit.
- ▶ Even during British India, there were 600 princely states which were internally autonomous.
- ▶ Our current form of democracy and government draws its existence from different political parties, political ideologies and so on.

Linguistic Elements of Unity in Diversity

- ▶ While three fourth of India speaks Indo-Aryan Languages, Dravidian languages are spoken by one fourth of Indians. India has 122 major languages and 1599 dialects, thus making it one of the most linguistically diverse nations around the world.
- ▶ The languages have been a divisive as well as adhesive force in the country.
- ▶ English emerged as lingua franca of the country and serves as medium of communication between two people who have different mother tongue.
- ▶ Similarly, Hindi has also, to a great extent, served to keep the country united. Films have played an important role.
- ▶ Major issues such as demand of linguistic states, status of minority, anti-Hindi movements etc. have posed major challenges to governments from time to time.



Institution of Pilgrimage as element of Unity in Diversity

- ▶ One of the important source of unity in India is its pilgrimage culture, reflected in network of religious shrines and sacred places.
- ▶ For example, Badrinath, Kedarnath in North, Dwarka / Somnath in West, Rameshwaram in South, Puri in East.
- ▶ The holy rivers across the length and breadth of the nation have fostered the sense of India as one unit.



Accommodation within Hinduism as element of unity in diversity

- ▶ Hinduism is not a homogenous religion with one God, one book, one temple and so on.
- ▶ It is a federation of faiths with multiple deities, multiple Holy Scriptures and multiple of faiths and philosophies including atheism.
- ▶ Its elastic character of Hinduism that has accommodated and adjusted with various faiths, religions etc. and has allowed coexistence of several faiths in India.

Tradition of Interdependence as element of unity in diversity

- ▶ Despite the fact that ours is a caste ridden society, India has a remarkable tradition of inter-dependence, which has kept it united for centuries.
- ▶ One example is the Jajmani System or functional interdependence of various castes. *Jajman* or *Yajman* is the recipient of certain services. This system initially developed in the villages between the food producing families and the families which supported them with other goods and services.
- ▶ The entire gamut of social order developed with Jajmani links with multiple types of payments and obligations. None of the caste was self sufficient and it depended for many things on other castes. Thus, each caste worked as a functional group and was linked with other caste via the mechanisms of Jajmani system.
- ▶ Though Jajmani system represented the inter-linking of Hindu caste yet, in practice this system crossed the boundary of religion and provided linkages between different religions also.
- ▶ For example, Hindu's dependence on Muslim weaver or washerman or Muslim's dependence on Hindu trader / tailor / Goldsmith etc. is a manifestation of that mechanism only, though not called so.



Conclusions

- ▶ Even though India is home to an old civilisation, the modern nation of India didn't come into being until long after it gained its independence from the British Empire.
- ▶ Nevertheless, the operation of a specific state is equally dependent on the historical context and culture of that state.
- ▶ The idea of civilization becomes significant when viewed from this angle.
- ▶ Understanding a civilization and the culture it upholds becomes significantly more crucial as a result of the concept of political systems, which relies on taking a holistic picture of a state.
- ▶ The structures of government can be borrowed, but the functioning and process of government is unquestionably determined by the culture and conduct of the people.

Thank you

