

Chp:5 INDIA THAT IS BHARAT

1.How Do We Learn About India's Ancient Names?

We learn about India's past names through several types of sources, much like historians use evidence to reconstruct history.

Ancient Texts: Religious and literary works like the Rig Veda, Mahabharata, and Vishnu Purana.

Inscriptions: Words carved into stone or rock by rulers, such as Emperor Ashoka.

Traveller and Pilgrim Accounts: Records left by visitors from other lands, such as Chinese travellers.

Constitution: A modern written document that preserves and confirms an ancient name.

2.Jambudvipa: “The island of the fruit of the jamun tree” (jambu = jamun fruit, dvipa = island). The jamun tree is a common tree native to India, also called the “jambul tree” or “Malabar plum tree.” This name came to mean the entire Indian Subcontinent

3.Bharatavarsha is an old (ancient) name of India meaning “the country of the Bharatas” — used in the Mahabharata for the entire Indian Subcontinent, named after the Bharata tribe/kings first mentioned in the Rig Veda; it later shortened to “Bharata,” the name still used for India today.

4.How the name “India” came :

- Ancient Indians called the Indus River “Sindhu.”
- Persians, unable to pronounce the “S” sound cleanly, said it as “Hindu” a geographical term only, not a religious one.
- Greeks, having no “H” sound at the start of such words, dropped it giving “Indoi” / “Indike.”
- This Greek form eventually evolved, through Latin and other European languages, into the modern English word “India.”

5.Foreign Traveller Insights

- **Xuanzang** was a Chinese traveller who visited India in the 7th century CE for 17 years, collecting Buddhist texts and later translating them into Chinese.

- **“Tianzhu,”** another Chinese name for India (from “Sindhu,” also meaning “heavenly master”), reflects the respect ancient Chinese had for India as the land of the Buddha.