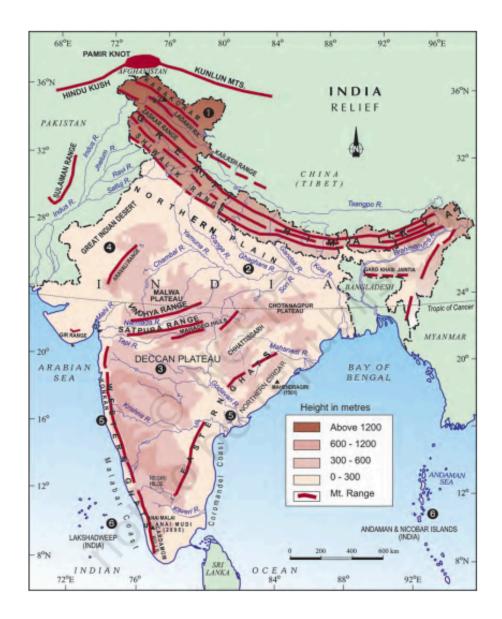
Why This Chapter Is Important?

India is a country of great physical diversity — from the high Himalayas to coastal plains and deserts. This chapter explains India's six major physical divisions, their formation, and importance.



Map Image: Physical Features of India – Fig. 2.2

India's Major Physiographic Divisions

- 1. The Himalayan Mountains
- 2. The Northern Plains
- 3. The Peninsular Plateau
- 4. The Indian Desert
- 5. The Coastal Plains
- 6. The Islands

The Himalayan Mountains

- Formation: Fold mountains, geologically young and active.
 - Run from Indus in the west to Brahmaputra in the east.
 - Arc-like shape: length ~2,400 km, width varies: 400 km (Kashmir) → 150 km (Arunachal Pradesh)

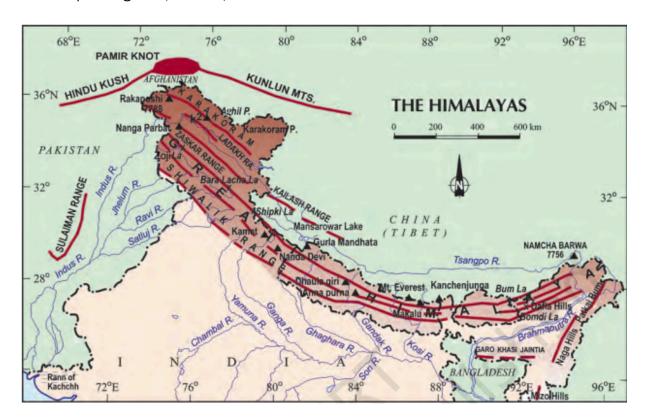


Fig. 2.1 – The Himalayas

Longitudinal Divisions:

- 1. Himadri (Greater Himalayas):
 - Northernmost, continuous range
 - o Average height: 6,000 m
 - o Contains highest peaks (e.g., Mt. Everest, Kanchenjunga)
- 2. Himachal (Lesser Himalayas):
 - o Below Himadri, height: 3,700-4,500 m
 - o Famous valleys: Kashmir, Kangra, Kullu
 - o Hill stations: Mussoorie, Nainital, Ranikhet
 - o Major ranges: Pir Panjal, Dhauladhar, Mahabharat
- 3. Shiwaliks (Outer Himalayas):
 - o Southernmost, height: 900-1,100 m
 - o Formed by unconsolidated sediments
 - o Narrow belt: 10-50 km
 - Longitudinal valleys called Duns (e.g., Dehra Dun)

Regional Divisions (W → E):

- Punjab Himalayas → Indus to Satluj
- Kumaon Himalayas → Satluj to Kali
- Nepal Himalayas → Kali to Teesta
- Assam Himalayas → Teesta to Dihang

Eastern Extension: Purvanchal Hills

- Consist of: Patkai, Naga, Manipur, Mizo Hills
- Located in North-East India



™ Fig. 2.4 – Mizo Hills

2 The Northern Plains

Formation: Made by alluvium from Indus, Ganga & Brahmaputra systems

• Area: ~7 lakh sq. km

• Length: ~2,400 km, Breadth: 240-320 km

• One of the most fertile & densely populated areas



Fig. 2.5 − The Northern Plains

Divisions of the Plain:

- 1. Punjab Plains → Formed by Indus system
- 2. Ganga Plains → Between Ghaggar & Teesta rivers
- 3. Brahmaputra Plains → Assam region

Relief-Based Zones:

• Bhabar → Pebble zone along Shiwaliks

- Terai → Marshy area just below bhabar
- Bhangar → Old alluvium, has kankar (calcium)
- Khadar → Newer alluvium, more fertile

3 The Peninsular Plateau

- 同 Oldest landmass of India formed by Gondwana breakup
 - Tableland with igneous & metamorphic rocks
 - Divided into two major parts:

📍 A. Central Highlands

- North of Narmada
- Includes Malwa Plateau
- Rivers: Chambal, Betwa, Sind, Ken
- Sub-regions: Bundelkhand, Baghelkhand
- Eastern extension: Chotanagpur Plateau (Damodar river)

📍 B. Deccan Plateau

- Triangular shape, south of Narmada
- Surrounded by Satpura, Mahadev, Maikal ranges
- Extends to NE: Meghalaya, Karbi-Anglong, North Cachar Hills
- Bounded by:
 - Western Ghats → High, continuous, 900–1600 m (Passes: Thal, Bhor, Pal)
 - Eastern Ghats → Low, broken, 600 m (Mahendragiri = highest peak)



Fig. 2.6 - Waterfall in Chotanagpur Plateau

Note:

- Deccan Trap → Black soil (from volcanic basalt)
- Aravali Hills → Old, eroded hills (Gujarat to Delhi)

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The Indian Desert

同 Location: West of Aravalis (Rajasthan)

- Sandy terrain, sand dunes, low rainfall (<150 mm)
- Stream like Luni dries before reaching sea
- Sand dunes: barchans (crescent), longitudinal



Fig. 2.7 – The Indian Desert

The Coastal Plains

Ducation: Narrow strips along east & west coasts

† Western Coastal Plains

- From Gujarat to Kerala
- Narrow, between Western Ghats & Arabian Sea
- Divisions:
 - Konkan (Mumbai-Goa)
 - Kannad Plain (Karnataka)
 - Malabar Coast (Kerala)

† Eastern Coastal Plains

- From Odisha to Tamil Nadu
- Broad, level, between Eastern Ghats & Bay of Bengal
- Divisions:
 - Northern Circar (Andhra-Odisha)
 - Coromandel Coast (Tamil Nadu)
- Major deltas: Mahanadi, Godavari, Krishna, Kaveri
- Chilika Lake: Largest saltwater lake (Odisha)



Tig. 2.8 - The Coastal Plains

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6 The Islands

India has two major island groups:

📍 Lakshadweep Islands (Arabian Sea)

- Small, coral islands
- 32 sq. km area
- Kavaratti = HQ
- Pitti = Bird sanctuary

📍 Andaman & Nicobar Islands (Bay of Bengal)

- Andaman = North, Nicobar = South
- Bigger, more spread out
- Volcanic origin (Barren Island = active volcano)
- Dense forests, equatorial climate
- Strategic importance



Fig. 2.9 - An Island

QUICK RECALL TABLE:

Division	Key Features
Himalayas	Young fold mountains, 3 ranges, snow-covered peaks, Duns
Northern Plains	Fertile alluvial soil, flat land, bhabar- terai-bhangar-khadar
Peninsular Plateau	Oldest, igneous/metamorphic rocks, Deccan Trap, black soil
Indian Desert	Arid, sand dunes, sparse vegetation, Luni river
Coastal Plains	Narrow (west), wide (east), delta- rich, Chilika Lake
Islands	Lakshadweep = coral, Andaman- Nicobar = volcanic, dense forest

E Conclusion:

Each physical feature complements the other:

- Mountains → water source & forests
- Plains → fertile for farming
- Plateau → minerals
- Coasts → fishing, ports
- Islands → biodiversity & strategic location