

Ancient Indian Geographers and Scholars

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Aryabhata (476–550 CE)

- A renowned mathematician and astronomer of ancient India.
- Proposed that the Earth is spherical and rotates on its axis.
- Suggested that lunar and solar eclipses occur due to shadows of Earth and Moon.
- Discussed geographical concepts in relation to astronomy.
- His work 'Aryabhatiya' influenced both Indian and Islamic scholars.

Varahamihira (505–587 CE)

- An eminent astronomer, astrologer, and geographer of the Gupta period.
- Author of 'Brihat Samhita', which contains valuable geographical and meteorological observations.
- Discussed rainfall, cloud formation, earthquakes, and winds in scientific terms.
- Studied directions, planetary motions, and their impact on earth.
- His works combined practical geography with astrology.

Bhaskaracharya (1114–1185 CE)

- Also known as Bhaskara II, a great mathematician and astronomer.
- Author of 'Siddhanta Shiromani' which included ideas of geography linked with astronomy.
- Explained planetary motions, eclipses, and time calculation.
- Described earth as a spherical body suspended in space.
- His concepts contributed to both mathematics and geographical thought.

Kautilya (Chanakya) (c. 4th century BCE)

- Philosopher, economist, and royal advisor, author of 'Arthashastra'.
- Provided detailed descriptions of land, rivers, mountains, forests, and resources of India.
- Suggested classifications of regions based on fertility, climate, and natural resources.
- Discussed strategic use of geography in administration, war, and trade.
- His work shows practical application of geographical knowledge in governance.

Kalidasa (c. 4th–5th century CE)

- Classical Sanskrit poet and dramatist, author of works such as 'Raghuvamsha' and 'Meghaduta'.
- His writings contain detailed references to mountains, rivers, forests, and seasons of India.
- Depicted the beauty of landscapes and natural phenomena in poetic form.
- Provided cultural and environmental geography through literature.
- His descriptions serve as important sources of geographical knowledge in ancient India.

Conclusion

- Ancient Indian scholars like Aryabhata, Varahamihira, Bhaskaracharya, Kautilya, and Kalidasa contributed significantly to geographical thought.
- Their works combined astronomy, mathematics, literature, and administration with geographical observations.
- They laid the foundation for the growth of geography in both scientific and cultural contexts in India.