

## India: An Economic and Commercial Geography

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Prof. Sharma's updated version of Economic And Commercial Geography of India, first published with Dr. Odilia Coutinho as co-author, was long overdue as the author himself admits. The book's popularity can be gauged by the fact that even today (the first edition was published in 1977), it finds a place among the best selling texts of economic and commercial geography in India.

The book, while retaining its original format, provides comprehensive coverage and an in-depth analysis of India's contemporary economic and commercial geography. In the revised edition, Sharma has provided a critical analysis of the economic problems and prospects, following the sweeping changes that have taken place in the post liberalisation era. The book is organised in 25 chapters. The first two chapters deal exclusively with the Physical environment. A concise description of India's geological history, regional relief, climate, natural vegetation and major soil types of India, set the stage for the ensuing discussion on land and water resources, and the development of irrigation that follows. Most major irrigation projects in the country have been covered here, while tracing the growth of irrigation. The utilisation potential in terms of sources of irrigation (state wise) has also been included. While reporting on land resources, Sharma discusses the current trends in land utilisation practises. The broad landuse categories outlined facilitate inter-state comparison. Since the impact of irrigation is felt on the overall pattern of agricultural development, in chapter V, Sharma discusses the problems and

future prospects of various aspects of agriculture.

The next three chapters 6,7, and 8 deal with food crops, both cereal and non-cereal, including commercial, plantation and garden crops. This is a detailed account, supported by an analysis of the contemporary trends in Indian agriculture. An overview of animal resources, sericulture and fisheries rounds up the discussion on agriculture and animal resources.

The next fourteen chapters provide a detailed survey of mineral resources: metallic, non-metallic, mineral fuels and power resources. Different types of industries: textiles, engineering, chemical and allied, followed by forest-based industries, processing and small-scale *khadi* and village industries, all find a mention in chapters 17 through 23.

Chapters 24 and 25, deal exclusively with transportation of all sorts: road, inland, waterways, shipping and air. Foreign trade is discussed in detail, in chapter 25. The book concludes with a discussion on growth of India's population, its distribution and unique attributes. This is surely the most complete text on India's changing economic landscape. It is strongly recommended, particularly to graduate level students of geography looking for a systematic, spatial and temporal account of India's physical and economic landscape at an affordable price.

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