Geography · GS - I

Why is India considered as a sub-continent?

Elaborate your answer.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2021	GS - I	Geography

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Geographical distinctiveness, Himalayan barrier, surrounding seas, Indian Plate, Gondwanaland, diverse landforms, monsoon climate, historical connections, cultural diversity, regional identity.

Model Answer

Introduction

A subcontinent is a large, geographically distinct region within a continent, characterised by distinctive physical features and historical-cultural developments. India forms the central part of the Indian subcontinent.

Reasons for India's Subcontinental Character

- **Distinct boundaries:** The Himalayas separate the region from much of Central Asia, while the Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean define its other sides.
- **Large geographical extent:** The wider Indian subcontinent includes India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka.
- **Distinct geological evolution:** The Indian Plate separated from Gondwanaland and collided with the Eurasian Plate, resulting in Himalayan formation.
- **Physical diversity:** The region contains the Indo-Gangetic plains, Thar Desert, Deccan Plateau, coastal plains and major mountain systems.
- **Climatic distinctiveness:** The South Asian monsoon shapes agriculture, settlement and economic activities.

- **Historical-cultural connections:** Trade, religious traditions and civilisational exchanges have created enduring regional links.

Conclusion

India's scale, geological history, physical boundaries and distinctive monsoonal environment justify describing it as part of a subcontinent. This geographical identity does not imply cultural uniformity.

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