

Study the topic carefully & Write hard word

Date-01-02-2022

Ch10-Life in desert region

Think of a desert and we will imagine an area which has a vast expanse covered by sand and where there is scarcity of water. It's difficult to visualize that millions of years ago, some of these areas were vast fertile plains which supported thick vegetation and a rich wildlife. The gradual changes in the climatic conditions changed the entire scene.

Today, these have been transformed into hot, dry, barren lands which seem more like wastelands. But life exists there even today. Let's find out more about these areas called 'deserts'.

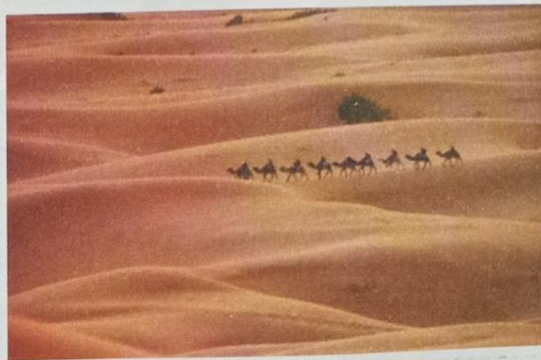
A desert is a region which experiences low rainfall (less than 25 cms), extremely harsh temperature conditions and supports scanty vegetation. Depending on the temperature conditions, these can be classified as hot deserts or cold deserts. Life exists here only wherever availability of water is assured. This chapter will draw a comparison between the physical conditions and life of people in these two types of deserts.

SAHARA—THE HOT DESERT (AFRICA)

Sahara is the world's largest desert. It covers an area of approximately 8.54 million sq. km and stretches across several countries of Africa. Lying between the Atlantic Ocean in the west, the Red Sea in the east and the Mediterranean Sea in the north, its southern part merges into the Savanna grasslands.

Let's Find UT

Find out and enlist the name of countries covered by this vast desert?



A view of the Sahara Desert

The huge Sahara desert does not have uniform relief. Besides vast stretches of sand, the area is also covered by vast stretches of pebbles and gravel and also high plateau with a bare rocky surface. Several oases are found here and these are the sources of fresh water for the people. River Nile flows across the eastern region and river Niger forms the southern borders. Lake Chad, the only fresh water lake is also located on the southern border.

Climate

The region experiences extremely hot and dry climate. The Rainy season is very short and marked with clear cloudless sky. The highest temperature of the world 58°C, has been recorded at *Al-Azizia* of Libya in this region. The range of temperature is very high, the lowest temperature on a winter night could be touching zero degrees whereas the day temperature in summers could rise as high as 55°C. Rainfall is very low, less than 25 cm and varies from area to area. The northern

part may receive winter showers whereas the southern part gets rain in summers.

Key Question 1

The oases are the source of life in the hot desert. How?

Natural Vegetation and Wildlife

Deserts are always associated with cactus, date palms and acacia. The Sahara region is dominated by these plants. However in the oasis areas, vegetation can be diverse and thicker.

Let's Find OUT

Is there any continent which does not have any deserts?

Oasis is a depression where underground water naturally comes out on the surface. These are the fertile areas where several crops can be grown and where we find permanent



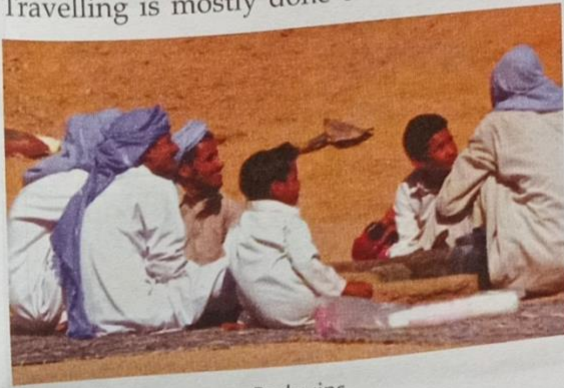
WORLD: Sahara and Ladakh Deserts

settlement in desert regions. Plants too have a way to adapt to the environment. In desert regions, the plants have long roots, thick barks and tiny waxy leaves.

Waxy leaves helps to reduce the rate of transpiration. Wildlife in the Sahara (—hot desert) consists of hyenas, jackals, foxes, scorpions, snakes, lizards and several types of insects.

People

Despite the harsh climate, life in the Sahara is quite active. Animal rearing, cultivation of crops, trading and mining are the main occupations of the people. The **Bedouins** and **Tuaregs** are the main nomadic tribes who are generally engaged in animal rearing. The animals provide milk, meat and hides. They make products like belts, slippers, carpets, clothes and blankets from animal's hair. They live in temporary homes, *i.e.*, tents and exchange their animal products with agricultural products from oasis dwellers. Travelling is mostly done on camel back.



Bedouins

Let's Find UT

Apart from oil which other minerals are found in the Sahara desert?

Permanent settlements exist in the Nile Valley in Egypt and in the oasis areas. The availability of water facilitates cultivation of crops like rice, wheat, barley and beans.

Apart from dates, several fruits like figs, olives, apricots and some vegetables are also grown. Cotton is cultivated in the fertile Nile Valley. Egyptian cotton is the best quality of cotton grown worldwide. Its fibre is the longest and strongest and helps Egypt earn a lot of foreign exchange.

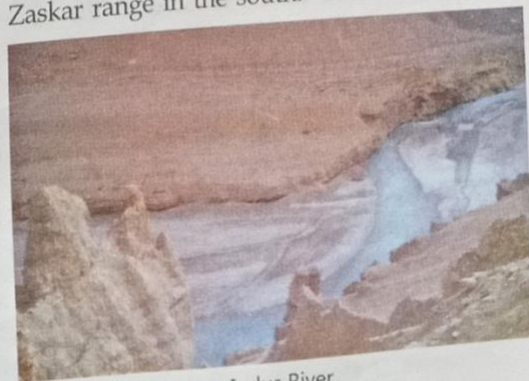
Key Question

The Nile River Basin of Sahara has a thick population concentration. Why?

Life for the natives is tough. Harsh and extreme physical conditions along with scarcity of water add to the hardship of the people. But things are changing after the discovery and exploration of oil which has helped in developing the economy of several countries of Sahara. Most of the essential items are now imported from other countries helping people to change to a more modern lifestyle.

LADAKH—THE COLD DESERT (INDIA)

Ladakh is located in the eastern part of Jammu and Kashmir. It is the region of high mountains known as Ladakh which means the country of the mountain 'pass' ('La' means 'mountain pass' and 'Dak' means country). Ladakh is made up of only two districts : Leh and Kargil. Lying north of the Greater Himalayas, it is bounded by Karakoram Range in the north and the Zaskar range in the south.



Indus River