

Chapter 1 Geographical Diversity of India

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The Big Questions

1. What are some key geographical features of India?

Answer:

The Himalayan Mountain Range, the Gangetic Plains, the Thar Desert, the Aravalli Hills, the Peninsular Plateau, the Sundarbans, the Lakshadweep Islands, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands are some key geographical features of India.

2. How does India's geographical diversity affect our lives?

Answer:

India's geographical diversity plays a crucial role in shaping its climate, culture, lifestyle, and food, affecting our lives in many ways:

- (i) Climate: The Himalayas are cold, the deserts are dry and arid, while the coastal areas are warm and humid. This influences what people wear and how they build their houses.
- (ii) Food: Different foods are grown in different regions — for example, rice is common in the south and east, while wheat is more common in the north.
- (iii) Clothing: In colder regions like Kashmir, people wear woollen clothes, whereas in the south, people wear light cotton clothes.
- (iv) Lifestyle: People living in deserts, mountains, or coastal areas have different jobs, traditions, and ways of life suited to their environment.

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Questions and activities

1. What, in your opinion, are two important geographical features of India? Why do you think they are important?

Answer:

The Himalayas and the Gangetic Plains are two important geographical features of India. They are important because:

The Himalayas are known as the 'Water Tower of Asia' as they provide water for drinking, agriculture, and industrial use, connecting the lives of hundreds of millions of people.

The Gangetic Plains have highly fertile soil that supports abundant agriculture. These plains sustain a large population, have an extensive road and railway network, and have long been important centers of travel and trade.

2. What do you think India might have looked like if the Himalayas did not exist? Write a short note or sketch a drawing to express your imagination.

Answer:

If the Himalayas did not exist:

- (i) Cold winds from Central Asia would make the Indian subcontinent much colder.
- (ii) The Gangetic Plains would be less fertile without snow-fed rivers.
- (iii) The monsoon would be weaker, as the Himalayas help trap rain clouds.
- (iv) Much of northern and central India could become dry or desert-like.
- (v) India might have absorbed more Central Asian culture and traditions.

3. India has been called a 'mini-continent'. Based on what you've read, why do you think this is so?

Answer:

India is called a 'mini-continent' because:

- (i) It has mountains, plains, deserts, plateaus, dense forests, and long coastlines.
- (ii) India experiences nearly every major climate type – arctic cold, desert dryness, monsoon rains and coastal humidity.
- (iii) India has over 1,600 languages, diverse traditions, festivals, food, clothing, and art forms across regions.

4. Follow one of India's big rivers from where it starts to where it meets the ocean. What are the different ways in which people might utilise this river along its journey? Discuss in groups in your class.

Answer:

The Ganga and how people use it along its journey:

- 1. Mountains (Uttarakhand): The river provides fresh water, hydroelectric power, and has sacred sites like Gangotri and Haridwar for pilgrims and tourists.
- 2. Plains (U.P., Bihar): It supports irrigation, fishing, and major religious cities like Varanasi and Prayagraj.
- 3. Delta (West Bengal): The river is used for transport, fish and crab farming, and supports wildlife in the Sundarbans.

5. Why is the southern part of India referred to as a peninsular plateau?

Answer:

A peninsula is a piece of land surrounded by water on three sides. Since, the southern part of India is surrounded by water on all three sides by the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal, and the Indian Ocean, it is called a peninsular plateau.

6. Which UNESCO Heritage Site mentioned in this chapter did you find more interesting? Write a short paragraph to describe what about it is interesting.

Answer:

The most interesting UNESCO World Heritage Site mentioned in the chapter is Sundarbans National Park.

It is the largest mangrove forest in the world and home to the Royal Bengal Tiger. It is located in the delta of the Ganga and Brahmaputra. The area has a rich and mysterious landscape due to its unique mix of river, sea, and land. About half of it lies in India, while the rest is in Bangladesh.

7. Look at the two maps of India, physical as well as political, given at the end of this book. Identify the place you are at now. Which physical feature of India would you use to describe its location?

Answer:

Punjab: It is located in the Northern Plains of India. This region has flat, fertile land formed by the Sutlej, Beas, and Ravi rivers, making it ideal for agriculture.

or

Maharashtra: It lies in the Deccan Plateau. This region has a mix of flat land, hills, rivers, and rich natural resources. The black soil here is ideal for growing cotton.

8. Food preservation techniques differ from place to place across India. They are adapted to local conditions. Do a class project. Gather different methods of preserving food. Hint: Drying vegetables when they are in season for use during the off-season.

Answer:

Some food preservation techniques found in India:

- (i) Ladakh – Drying and freezing.
- (ii) Punjab and North India – Sun drying.
- (iii) Rajasthan – Picking in oils/spices.
- (iv) Maharashtra – Salting and drying.
- (v) Kerala – Smoking and salting.
- (vi) Assam and Northeast – Fermentation.
- (vii) Gujarat – Preserving in sugar/jaggery.

9. Despite having such different regions (mountains, deserts, plains, coasts), India remains one country. How do you think our geography has helped unite people?

Answer:

- (i) Rivers like the Ganga and Godavari flow across many states connecting people through water resources, religious practices and trade routes.
- (ii) The Northern Plains with large population have been centres of kingdoms, trade and culture.
- (iii) India's long coasts helped sea trade, with ports like Mumbai and Chennai becoming major trade centers.
- (iv) Passes like the Khyber Pass brought traders and travelers from Central Asia.
- (v) The monsoon is important for farming across India, creating a shared way of life.