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LESSON
PART 1





In this lesson, we shall learn about :

- ◆ The Northern Plains of India
- Three parts of the Northern plains
 - (a) The Satluj basin
 - (b) The Ganga basin
 - (c) The Brahmaputra basin

New Words

fertile, alluvial, tributaries, basin, delta, transport, pollute

The Northern Plains lie to the south of the Shivalik hills. It is a vast area which stretches from Asom in the east to Punjab in the west. The east-west length of these plains is about 2,400 kilometres and the width varies between 150 km to 300 km.

Various rivers flow through this region which make it quite fertile. The rivers Satluj, Ganga, Yamuna and Brahmaputra flow through it. These rivers bring down fine soil called silt from the mountains. During the rainy season, the rivers overflow and the silt, rocks and fine sand are deposited on the land. These sediments make up a fertile soil which is called alluvial soil. It is very good for crops and helps to produce a large variety of crops every year. So, this region is known as the 'Food Bowl of India'.

The most distinct feature of the Northern Plains is that these plains are very flat. Besides, these plains receive heavy rainfall during the monsoon. The eastern part of these plains get more rain than the western part. There is an extensive network of canals and wells. It is helpful in irrigating the crops. The rivers also get water throughout the year from the melting snow of the Himalayas. Thus, rich soil and plenty of water have made the Northern Plains prosperous.



River Satluj



River Ganga



River Yamuna



River Brahmaputra

Activity

Look at the map of India and find some tributaries of the rivers Satluj, Ganga and Brahmaputra which have made Northern Plains so fertile.



The area which is watered by a river or its tributaries is called a basin. The three great rivers: The Satluj, the Ganga and the Brahmaputra divide the Northern Plains into three parts. These parts are called the Satluj Basin, the Ganga Basin and the Brahmaputra Basin.

The Satluj Basin : The Satluj Basin lies in the Western-most part of the Northern Plains. The river Satluj and its tributaries flow down this basin. The main tributary of the Satluj river is the river Beas. The Indian states located in this basin are Punjab and Haryana.



River Satluj

Some Facts :

- The Satluj and the Beas join the river Indus in Pakistan. The Indus flows into the Arabian Sea.
- The Tehri Dam built over the Bhagirathi is the highest dam in India.



Bhakra Nangal Dam

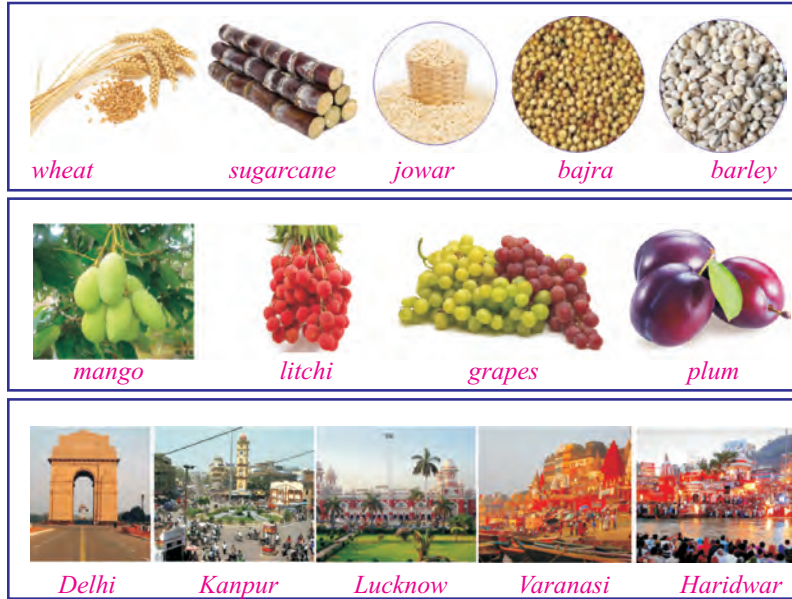
The Bhakra Nangal Dam is built on the Satluj river. It helps to irrigate a large area of land. It is also used to produce electricity. The climate of the Satluj basin is extreme. It is very hot in summer and very cold in winter. The basin does not receive much rains. So, the main sources of irrigation are canals, wells and tube-wells. Wheat is the main crop of this area. Rice, barley, gram, sugarcane, etc are other important crops. Amritsar, Ludhiana, Chandigarh, Jalandhar, Ambala, Karnal, Panipat, Rohtak, Hissar and Faridabad are the important towns of this region. These are mainly industrial towns.

The Ganga Basin: The Ganga Basin lies between the Satluj in the west and the Brahmaputra in the east. It covers the largest part of the Northern Plains. It extends from Delhi and Uttar Pradesh to Bihar and West Bengal. The basin is watered by the rivers the Ganga, the Yamuna and their tributaries. The Ganga is the largest river of this basin. It originates as Bhagirathi from Gangotri glacier in the Himalayas and enters the Northern Plains at Haridwar with a great speed. On its way, river Mandakini and Alaknanda join it. As it passes the Northern Plains, many tributaries such as Yamuna, Ramganga, Ghaghra, Gandak and Kosi join the Ganga. All these rivers also originate from the Himalayas. There are many other tributaries which join the Ganga and the Yamuna from the south. These rivers are Chambal, Betwa, Ken, Sind and Sone. These rivers originate from the Southern Plateau.



Ganga Basin

The Ganga Basin receives more rainfall than the Satluj Basin. So, the region gets more water for irrigation. The major crops of this basin are wheat, sugarcane, jowar, bajra, barley and grams. Some fruits like mango, litchi, grapes, plum, etc. are also grown here. The major crops of Bengal and Bihar are rice and jute. This basin is densely populated because it is very fertile. Delhi, Kanpur, Lucknow, Varanasi, Haridwar, Mathura and Kolkata are important cities of the Ganga Basin.



Some Facts :

The Ganga is joined by the river Yamuna and the river Saraswati at Prayag (Allahabad). This meeting place is called Sangam. It is one of the most important holy places of the Hindus.

Ganga flows through the south and splits into several branches. Many of them join the river Brahmaputra after passing through Bangladesh, one of our neighbouring countries. In the West Bengal, Ganga splits into two branches. One branch of them is called Hugli. It is the main river of the West Bengal. Kolkata, the second biggest city of India is situated on the banks of river Hugli. The other branch called Padma flows through Bangladesh. Finally, it reaches the Bay of Bengal at Ganga Sagar. Here it joins the Brahmaputra. Both the rivers form a delta. It is known as the Sunderbans Delta, the world's largest delta. Its major part lies in Bangladesh.



River Brahmaputra



River Hugli

Some Facts :

The part of the delta which lies in West Bengal is known as the Sunderbans Delta. It is the home of various wild animals such as tiger, crocodile, elephant, etc.

Think and Discuss

The rivers Chambal and Betwa are the tributaries of the Yamuna. These rivers originate from the Southern Plateau. Therefore, they do not have much water during the summer. Can you tell why?



The Brahmaputra Basin : The Brahmaputra Basin forms the easternmost part of the Northern Plains. The river Brahmaputra originates in Tibet where it is called Tsangpo. The river enters India from the east. It flows through Arunachal Pradesh and Asom. Then it enters Bangladesh. Here it joins the Ganga to form the world's biggest delta the **Sunderbans**.



Garo Hills



Khasi-Jaintia Hills



Naga Hills



rice



jute



tea

The Brahmaputra basin is very narrow and it is surrounded by hills and mountains on three sides. The major hills are the Garo Hills, the Khasi-Jaintia Hills and the Naga Hills. Asom and a small part of West Bengal lie in this basin.

The Brahmaputra basin receives the heaviest rainfall in India. In rainy season, the river overflows its banks. Sometimes, the river gets flooded and causes a great loss to flora and fauna. The major crops of this basin are rice, jute and tea. Shillong, Guwahati and Dispur are the major cities of this basin.

The Northern Plains are very fertile. The climate is quite suitable. Many crops are grown here. This plain has good transport facilities. The region is thickly populated because of its suitable climate, fertile soil, variety of crops and good facilities of transport. There are many industries in

this region. Cotton and woollen textile, iron and steel industries, sugar mills and leather works are some of them. But these industries also pollute the water of these rivers. They dump huge waste materials into the rivers. They have turned the holy rivers into an open sewer. Our government has started a programme to restore the purity of water of these rivers. Our former Prime



Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi had launched a project called the **Ganga Action Plan** to clean the river Ganga. Similarly, the **Yamuna Action Plan** has been launched by our government to clean the river Yamuna. We hope that these holy rivers will retain their purity in near future.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

1. The Northern Plains are very vast and fertile.
2. The Northern Plains stretch from Punjab to Asom.
3. The Northern Plains are divided into three parts — the Satluj Basin, the Ganga Basin and the Brahmaputra Basin.
4. The Ganga Basin is the largest basin of India.
5. Many rivers rise from the Himalayas such as the Ganga, Yamuna, Satluj, Brahmaputra, etc.
6. The Northern Plains region is thickly populated because of its good climate, fertile soil, variety of crops and good transport facilities.



EXERCISE

A. Fill in the blanks :

1. The Ganga rises from the _____ glacier in the Himalayas.
2. The Yamuna joins the Ganga with the river Saraswati at a place called _____
3. The Satluj basin receives _____ rainfall.
4. The _____ in Tibet is called the Tsangpo.
5. The Ganga and the Brahmaputra rivers form a _____ along the Bay of Bengal.

B. Write 'T' for True and 'F' for False :

1. The Bhakra Nangal Dam has been built on the river Ganga. ()
2. The Ganga originates as Bhagirathi from Gangotri glacier. ()
3. The Brahmaputra is called Tsangpo in Tibet. ()
4. The Satluj Basin receives heavy rainfall. ()
5. The Yamuna Action Plan was launched by Shri Rajiv Gandhi. ()

C. Name the following:

1. A fertile soil made up of silt, rock particles and fine sand _____
2. The two states located in the Satluj Basin _____
3. The river joined by the Satluj and Beas in Pakistan _____
4. The branch of Ganga that flows in Bangladesh _____
5. The longest river of India _____

D. Answer the following questions :

1. What is a basin ?
2. Why are the Northern Plains called the 'Food Bowl of India' ?
3. What is the 'Ganga Action Plan' ?
4. Where has the Bhakra Nangal Dam been built ?
5. Where is Sunderbans Delta and which rivers form it?
6. Which important crops are grown in the Satluj and Ganga Basins ?

Project/Activity

- E. 1. Make a list of the rivers with their tributaries which rise from the Himalayas.
2. Find out the names of five important cities which are located on the banks of a river.

F. Mark the following on the outline map of India:

The Satluj Basin, the Ganga Basin and the Brahmaputra Basin

G. HOTS: Why are plains near river basins fertile and suitable for farming ?