



**CLICK HERE TO ACTIVATE**

**LESSON**  
PART 1





In this lesson, we shall learn about :

- ◆ The Thar desert
- ◆ The people and their lifestyle
- ◆ Climate and vegetation
- ◆ Places of tourist attraction

### □ New Words

sand dunes, water, springs, oasis, nomads, banjaras, caravans

The Great Indian Desert lies to the West of the Northern Plains. The region is vast, dry, sandy and full of rocks. It is also known as the Thar Desert. It stretches from Kachchh in Gujarat in the south-west to the border of Haryana and from the Aravalli Hills to the border of Pakistan in the west. It is 800 km long and 200 to 500 km wide. The major part of the state Rajasthan lies in this desert.



Vast



Dry



Sand



Rocks

### ■ Some Facts :

The Great Indian Desert covers an area of about 2,60,000 sq. km.

Since a desert receives very little rain it has scarcity of water and so less plantation and vegetation. Only thorny plants like Cactus, Kikar and Babool grow here. At places, there are some small hills of sand. These are called sand dunes. Sometimes, strong winds carry sand very far away. Thus, sand dunes do not stay at one place. They keep on moving with the winds. Dust storms or sand storms are common in a desert.

The climate of a desert is extreme. It is very hot in summer and very cold in winter. Here the days are very hot and nights are very cold because the sand gets heated fast in the sunshine and loses heat fast at night.



Cactus



Kikar



Babool



Desert



Sand dunes

Deserts have scarcity of water. There are no rivers. It rains very less here. People do not have water even for drinking. They have to go to far off places to get water. The life in a desert is very difficult. Whenever it rains in a desert, small streams are made.



*Water Shortage in Desert*

There are some spring wells in the deserts. We can find some plantation here. People grow date palms, crops and grasses here. Such a place is called an oasis. People live near an oasis. They do farming and grow crops like wheat, maize, jowar, bajra, etc. They rear sheep and goats. People living in a desert are called nomads. They do not stay at one place permanently. They keep on moving from one place to another in search of livelihood. This tribe is called the Banjara.



*Date palms*

*Grass*

*Cactus*



*Wheat*

*Maize*

*Banjaras*

### Some Facts :

Rajasthan has the largest number of sheep in India. Bikaner is the biggest centre of wool in India.



Camel is the most useful animal in a desert. It can store sufficient food as fat in its hump, which is on its back. It also can store much water in its stomach. It can travel on sand without food and water for many days. It has large padded feet, so it can walk over the sand easily. It provides milk. It is also used to plough the fields and draw water from the wells. So, it is rightly called 'The Ship of the Desert'. People travel on camels and camel carts. They travel in a group. Such a group is called a caravan.

### Some Facts :

People drink the milk of a camel. Its hair is used to make clothes and its skin is used to make tents.

Luni is the only river that flows in Rajasthan. It is a seasonal river which flows through the Rann of Kachchh. Now, the government is trying to improve the conditions of Rajasthan. The water of the Satluj and its tributaries have been brought to this desert through a long canal, called the Rajasthan Canal or the Indira Gandhi Canal. It has a large wheat farm set up by the government at Suratgarh, near Ganganagar. This farm has an area of about 40,000 acres. It is the largest farm in our country. The Indira Gandhi Canal covers the area of Ganganagar, Bikaner and Jaisalmer. Farmers are now able to grow crops like wheat, maize and millets.



*Indira Gandhi Canal or Rajasthan Canal*

As the great Indian desert is full of sand everywhere, there are few roads and railways. Camel is the only means to travel.

The major towns of the Indian desert are Jaisalmer, Ganganagar, Bikaner, Suratgarh and Jodhpur. Jaipur is the capital of Rajasthan. It is called 'The Pink City'. Udaipur is another city famous for its beauty. It is called the City of Lakes. Most of the cities of Rajasthan are famous for historical buildings, forts and beautiful places. Mount Abu is a small but beautiful hill station of Rajasthan. The places here attract a large number of tourists every year. The people here wear colourful dresses. Men wear bright coloured turbans with dhoti and achkan. Women wear ghagra, long choli with odhani. They wear traditional silver jewellery and many bangles. The main languages spoken here are Hindi and Rajasthani. The festivals, people celebrate here are Teej, Diwali, Holi, Id, Dussehra and Gangaur. The Ghoomar dance of Rajasthan is famous all over the world. The desert festival is very popular among tourists. Pushkar fair of Rajasthan is a famous animal fair. Rajasthan is also famous for its handicrafts. People paint their houses with decorative designs. Cement, glass, woollen goods, rugs, sugar and dyes are some major industries in Rajasthan.



*Jaisalmer*



*Hawa Mahal, Jaipur*



*Suratgarh*



*Jodhpur*



*Traditional Dress*



*Traditional Dance*



*Traditional Celebrations*

## ■ THINGS TO REMEMBER

1. The Great Indian Desert or the Thar Desert lies to the west of the Northern Plains.
2. There are small hills of sand, called sand dunes.
3. The climate of desert is extreme. The days are very hot and the nights are very cold.
4. At some places in deserts, we have water, trees and grasses. These places are called oases.
5. The people living in a desert are called nomads or banjaras.
6. The Indira Gandhi Canal is changing Rajasthan into a green area.



## EXERCISE

### A. Fill in the blanks :

1. The Thar desert is in the state of \_\_\_\_\_
2. In deserts, mostly people live near an \_\_\_\_\_ and grow crops there.
3. The only river that flows in Rajasthan is \_\_\_\_\_
4. A desert receives \_\_\_\_\_ rainfall.
5. In deserts, \_\_\_\_\_ are common during the summer season.

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

1. The Great Indian Desert is also known as the Thar Desert. ( )
2. The climate of a desert is very cold in every season. ( )
3. Deserts have scarcity of water. ( )
4. Horse is the most useful animal in a desert. ( )
5. Udaipur is called the City of Lakes. ( )

### C. Name the following :

1. The capital city of Rajasthan \_\_\_\_\_
2. The only river of Rajasthan \_\_\_\_\_
3. The canal which changed Rajasthan into a green area \_\_\_\_\_
4. The main languages spoken in Rajasthan \_\_\_\_\_
5. The Pink City \_\_\_\_\_

### D. Answer the following questions :

1. What is a desert ?
2. What is an oasis ?
3. Where does the Great Indian Desert lie ?
4. What kind of climate is found in Rajasthan ?
5. Why is a camel called the 'Ship of the Desert' ?

## Project / Activity

**E. Nomads generally keep on moving in search of livelihood. They are seen in every city now. Write a short note on their lifestyle - what dresses they wear, their occupation, the houses they live in and the language they speak.**

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

- |                                   |                            |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. The Great Indian Desert region | 2. The Indira Gandhi Canal |
| 3. Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner       | 4. The Aravalli Range      |

### G. HOTS

1. How do plants like cactus & animals like camel live in such hot conditions ? Give two reasons each.