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LESSON
PART 1 



In this lesson, we shall learn about :

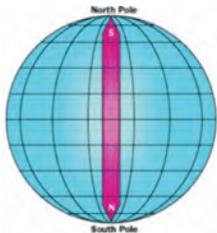
- ◆ Greenland, the land of ice and snow
- ◆ Its climate, natural vegetation and wildlife
- ◆ People and their way of living (primitive and modern)
- ◆ Their occupations

New Words

iceberg, khua, lichens, parka, harpoons, blubber, ridges, loon, crevasses, inuit, skidoo

As we have studied that the earth has two poles the North Pole and the South Pole, the areas around these poles are called the Polar Regions. Both these regions are extremely cold and are called Frigid Zones. They remain covered with snow throughout the year. Therefore, these areas are **barren**.

Arctic is the region of continuous cold around the North Pole. It includes the Arctic Ocean, thousands of islands and the northern parts of the continents of Europe, Asia and North America. Greenland, the largest island of the world lies in this region.



Activity

With the help of the map, find out five more islands in the world.

Greenland: Greenland is located between the North Atlantic and Arctic Oceans. The name 'Greenland' was given by a Viking Explorer, Eric the Red, in about 981 AD. It was captured by Denmark in 1380. It became a province of Denmark in 1953 and attained the right of full internal self-government in January 1981. Its capital is **Nuuk**, earlier known as **Godthab**.



Greenland is only 650 kilometres away from the North Pole and only 16 kilometres away from Canada. It is the largest dependent territory by area in the world. Cape Morris Jesup, the northernmost tip of the world, is situated in Greenland.

Greenland has an area of about 2,175,600 square kilometres. It extends for about 2,680 kilometres from north to south and 1,280 kilometres from east to west.

Land Surface : Greenland has mountains and rocky surface. Most part of island has a flat terrain that is under permanent ice. In some places, the ice is 2 to 3 km deep. This ice is known as ice-cap. The surface of this ice-cap looks like land. It has high ridges and deep crevasses. Sometimes, a piece of the ice breaks off and slides into the sea. This floating piece of ice is called as ice-berg. Ice-bergs are a great danger for the ships. If a ship hits an ice-berg, it may wreck and sink because they are much bigger below the surface of the sea water than they appear on the surface.



Ice-berg

Think and Discuss

In 1912, a gigantic ship sank after hitting a huge ice-berg. Can you tell its name ?

Climate: The climate of Greenland is called **Polar climate**. It is very far away from the Equator. Therefore, it receives the slanting rays of the sun even in summers.



Summer is short and lasts only for two months while winter is long and extremely cold. It experiences very little rainfall. The temperature is always below 0°C. During winter, one may not see the sun for several months. The region receives heavy snow fall. Most of the year, the chill polar winds blow at a speed of 160 km per hour. Therefore, the months are full of darkness in winters.

Activity

Try to find out any one place in India where the climate is similar with that of Greenland.

Some Facts :

In summers, the sun shines brightly all the 24 hours in most parts, even at midnight. That is why the Polar regions are called the 'Land of Midnight Sun'. But the temperature is still below 0°C.

Natural Vegetation : Greenland has scarcity of vegetation. Most of the area remains covered with ice throughout the years. So, it is not possible to grow plants. During the very short summer season, short grasses and lichen grow here. There are small plants just 15 cm high. These are used as fodder for animals. There also grow many berries like blueberries and canberries.



Think and Discuss

Why is agriculture not the main occupation in Greenland ?



Wildlife: The Greenland is surprisingly rich in animal life. Animals, which can tolerate extreme cold, are found in a large number here. The common animal species are the reindeer, musk ox, arctic fox, hare, lemming, arctic wolf, polar bear and walrus. These animals have thick warm fur which protect them from harsh cold. The most common animals are reindeer and caribon. Reindeer is a good source of milk and meat.

A large variety of birds are also found in Greenland such as petrels, gulls, puffins, snowy owls, eider ducks, geese, Arctic tern and sea birds like **khua** and **loon**. Many insects like bees, flies, butterflies and mosquitoes are also found here. Seals, whales, trout, salmon and cod are some species of fish found here. They are hunted by the people for food, clothing and other necessities of life. But no reptile is found in Greenland.

Some Facts :

Birds like Arctic tern, duck, geese and waders come here in summer and migrate to the South Pole in winter. The Arctic tern is the greatest migratory bird in the world.

People and their way of living : The native people of Greenland are **Eskimos**. They have learnt to live in extreme climate. They wear clothes made of animal fur. They wear long leather boots and hood-lined jackets called **Parka**. They keep their head covered. All men, women and children wear same type of clothes. The population here is small.

People here prefer to call themselves **Inuit** which means the ‘**real man**’ in place of Eskimos which means ‘**eater of raw meat**’. They speak Inupiaq and other dialects. Their important occupations are hunting and fishing.



Traditionally, the Inuits were nomadic and lived in small families. They are skilled hunters. **Harpoon** is their main weapon. It is a spear having a long rope. They used it in hunting seals, walruses and big fishes. They cut holes in the ice and wait near it for the fish or seal to come. They hit it with the harpoon.

The boat, they use for hunting sea animals, is called **Kayak**. They are good swimmers. They use sledges pulled by **huskies** to carry their big and heavy hunt. Huskies are wolf like dogs. They have thick fur and a bushy tail. Reindeer is also used to pull sledges.

Eskimos are short and stout, having straight black hair. They have narrow black eyes and high cheek bones. The colour of their skin is yellowish brown which protect them from the bright light reflected by the snow.



Igloo

The Eskimos are nomads. They do not live in permanent houses. During the winter, they built **igloos** with ice-blocks. An igloo is dome-shaped with a small hole at the top. Smoke and hot air can pass through it. A tunnel is built to enter the house. One has to crawl to enter it. The floor is covered with a spread of fur. The fat from animals is used as fuel. This fat is called **blubber**. During the short summer season, they live in tents and rear **reindeers**.



Changing Lifestyle : The life of Inuit has undergone many changes in recent times. Many of them have shifted to small towns and live in wooden houses. Now, they have permanent houses with electricity. Primary schools, hospitals, shops, clubs have been established.

Education for the children upto 14 years is compulsory. They have begun to use rifles for hunting. In place of Kayaks, motor boats have been made available for them. Now, they use motorised sledges called **skidoo** for transport and fishing.



Motorised Sledges

Now Greenland is no longer as isolated as it was earlier. Big ships transport goods of all kinds from other lands. Air services in Greenland are closer to the rest of the world. The major airport is Kangerlussuaq Airport on the West Coast at Kangerlussuaq.

Fur farms have been established to breed animals. Good roads and a fine network of communication have been developed. Many small towns have been built in coastal areas. **Nuuk** is the biggest town. It is major centre for fish processing. Fish is canned and exported to other countries.



Nuuk - Capital of Greenland

Some Facts :

Many Eskimos have renounced their native religion for Christianity.

Occupations : Hunting, fishing and fish exports are the major occupations of the people of Greenland. Cod, salmon, halibut and shrimp are some fish which are canned and exported. The shrimp fishing industry is the largest income earner. Numerous mineral prospects are growing



increasingly such as aluminium, nickel, platinum, tungsten, copper and titanium. Sheep rearing and farming are also done in summer season in the south-west coastal regions. Hay, potatoes and vegetables are grown.

To attract tourists, the country holds contests such as dog racing, ice-fishing, hiking and cross country racing. Football is the national sport of Greenland, but it is not a member of Federation of International Football Association (FIFA).



□ THINGS TO REMEMBER

1. Greenland is the land of ice and snow. It lies in the Tundra region.
2. Greenland is the world's largest island.
3. The native people of Greenland are called Eskimos.
4. They live in igloos built by the ice-blocks in Greenland.
5. Greenland experiences a very cold climate throughout the year.
6. It is also called the 'Land of the Midnight Sun'.
7. The Eskimos are skilled hunters. Hunting and fishing are their major occupations.
8. Reindeer and huskies are the important animals of Greenland.
9. Greenland is making a rapid progress with the help of modern science and technology.



EXERCISE

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

1. Greenland has a polar climate. ()
2. Kayak is a small boat used by Eskimos for travelling. ()
3. Blubber of sea animals is used as fuel. ()
4. Eskimos are now known as Greenlanders. ()
5. Huskies are wolf like dogs. ()

B. Fill in the blanks :

1. _____ is the largest island of the world.
2. Greenland is under the control of _____
3. Greenland is also called the 'Land of _____ '
4. The sledges are pulled by _____
5. _____ is the capital of Greenland.

C. Match the following :

- | | | |
|---------------|-----|-------------------------------|
| 1. Parka | () | (a) A migratory bird |
| 2. Inuit | () | (b) Capital City of Greenland |
| 3. Kayak | () | (c) A hooded jacket |
| 4. Nuuk | () | (d) A one man boat |
| 5. ArcticTern | () | (e) Native of Greenlands |

D. Write one word for the following :

1. The modern motorised sledge _____
2. The spear with a long leather rope _____
3. The national sport of Greenland _____



4. The house built with ice-blocks _____
5. The floating blocks of ice _____
6. A wheelless cart for conveying loads or passengers over snow or ice _____

E. Correct the following statements :

1. 'Eskimos' means the 'real man'.
2. Greenland has a plenty of rainfall.
3. Greenland is rich in natural vegetation.
4. Greenland is poor in animal life.
5. Nuuk is the port town of Greenland.

F. Answer the following questions :

1. Why are the Polar regions very cold ?
2. What are icebergs ? Why are sailors afraid of them ?
3. How is the climate of Greenland ?
4. Why is Greenland called the 'Land of the Midnight Sun' ?
5. What are the main occupations of the people of the Greenland ?
6. How is the Eskimos' lifestyle changing?

Project / Activity

G. Collect the pictures of the animals found in Greenland and paste them in your scrap book.

H. On the basis of the reading of the lesson, make a project comparing the lifestyle of Eskimos of modern times with their primitive lifestyle in the following contexts :

1. food
2. shelter
3. occupation