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India—The Western Desert

Lesson Plan

Contents

- ▶ The Western Desert – Thar
- ▶ Location and extent
- ▶ Climate and vegetation
- ▶ Life of the People: Occupation, the camel, dress, language, festivals.

Objectives

- ▶ Learning about the Great Indian Desert – the Thar Desert
- ▶ Location and Extent: Western Rajasthan – boundaries
- ▶ Climate and Vegetation – the Rajasthan Canal
- ▶ Life of the people – occupations of nomads called banjaras, the camel and its value to the people, language, festivals, dances, etc.

Teacher's Aids

- ▶ Maps of India—Political and Physical
- ▶ Atlases
- ▶ Blank maps of India for the students
- ▶ Blackboard, internet, pictures, magazines, etc.

Tips for Teacher

- ▶ Students can make a model of a desert on a tray in class as a project.
- ▶ The location of the places should be pointed out on the maps.
- ▶ The famous puppets of Rajasthan can be used to introduce the desert.

Gear Up, Background and Reading

- ▶ The picture in Gear Up is of Maharana Pratap, a Rajput King of Mewar, a desert kingdom, who fought against the Mughal armies of Akbar. There are legends and history about him and his famous horse, Chetak.

- ▶ Read the lesson aloud, including the points to remember, and explain.
- ▶ Give a background of the desert area, with its boundaries.
- ▶ Show pictures and film clippings available on the internet.

▄▄▄ Landforms

- ▶ Stony desert towards the eastern side, sandy to the west.
- ▶ Sand dunes – shifting hills of sand – dust storms.
- ▶ Seasonal rivers – Luni – explain difference between seasonal and perennial rivers.
- ▶ Oasis.

Climate and Vegetation

- ▶ Hot days, cool nights, because of sand heating and cooling fast; dust storms.
- ▶ Very cold in winters.
- ▶ Very little or no rainfall.
- ▶ Hardly any vegetation except some bushes and thorny shrubs. Plants with long roots.
- ▶ Shortage of water for drinking and irrigating.
- ▶ The Rajasthan Canal, or Indira Gandhi Canal, the longest canal in the world, used for irrigation.

▄▄▄ Life of People in the Western Desert

- ▶ Sparse population because of harsh climate, Small villages near oases.
- ▶ Occupations: Animal rearing – sheep, goats, cattle and camels. Banjaras – nomads. Skilled craftsmen and musicians – stonework, embroidery, bidri work, tie and dye, jewellery, etc. Crops like wheat, maize, jowar, bajra, etc. Mining and quarrying. Tourism.
- ▶ The Ship of the Desert: Camel essential – can live for long without food and water and walk on sand; pull carts/ploughs; carry loads; milk, meat; skin and hair for tents, crafts, clothes, carpets.
- ▶ Jaipur, the Pink City [capital]; other important cities and towns.
- ▶ Dresses, Languages, Arts and Festivals; Houses with flat roofs. Desert Festival, Palace on Wheels, Dilwara Temple.