

The Great Indian Desert

LIFE IN THE DESERT LANDS

The Great Indian Desert lies to the south-west of the Gangetic plain. It covers the western region of the State of **Rajasthan**.

Life in the desert lands is very hard. There is acute shortage of water. In some villages people have to travel a few kilometres to get the daily supply of drinking water.



Carving Temple idols is special to craftsmen of Rajasthan

The scarcity of rainfall makes agriculture very difficult. The natural growing plants are thorny bushes. Camel is the beast of burden. Sand is heated very fast. So the days are very hot. The nights are very cold.

Water pools spring up at some places. People around these live in small villages. Goats are reared as they can survive on thorny bushes.

Some areas where water is available for irrigation have developed into big agricultural centres. The Indira Gandhi Canal is now providing irrigation facilities in a number of districts. The districts like Ganganagar have developed into big centres for production of cotton.



A Rajasthani warrior

It is very difficult to lay roads and railway lines across sandy plains. However road transport is fairly developed in most parts of Rajasthan.

There are mica, copper and zinc mines in this region. Marble quarries make Rajasthan a unique region. The famous Taj Mahal was built out of marble from Makrana. People of Rajasthan are excellent craftsmen. They make beautiful handicrafts using lac, gems and precious stones, marble inlay and tie and dye textiles.

People of Rajasthan have been brave warriors. There are a number of forts and small fortresses spread all over the desert lands. Rana Pratap and Rana Sanga are the legendary persons of Rajasthan noted for their bravery.

The natural surroundings are dull. But the people wear very colourful clothes to make life colourful.

Dhoti, waist coat and turban are worn by men. Women wear traditional ghagra, a blouse and dupatta.

Millets are common diet of the people. Wheat, rice, vegetables and maize are also consumed.

Rajasthanis are very lively people. Teej is celebrated during the monsoon months. The other important festival is Gangaur. Rajasthanis have their own traditional folk dances and songs.



Rajasthanis wear colourful dresses



A camel race



Rajasthani folk dancers

The desert areas have become a big tourist attraction. Large number of people from European countries come to see the forts and palaces of Rajasthan. Some others come to experience life in the sandy deserts. One can see shifting sand dunes, camel caravans and dancing Rajasthani women.

The annual fair at Pushkar with its camel races is a big tourist draw. People from a number of Islamic countries come specially to the city of Ajmer to pray at the Dargah of sufi saint popularly known as Garib Nawaz.



Dilwara Temple

Many towns in Rajasthan are known for their famous temples. Mount Abu is known for the famous Dilwara Temple.

Jaipur, Ajmer, Chittaurgarh, Udaipur and Jodhpur are some of the important cities of Rajasthan.

There are a number of tribal people within Rajasthan. The Bhils are settled in the Aravalli hill ranges. Hindi is the official language. Rajasthani is spoken by the local people.

Nature made Rajasthan a dry land. But the hard working people have made it a tourist attraction.

Things to Remember

The Great Indian Desert covers the State of Rajasthan.

Water is scarce in most parts. The soil is sandy.

Camel is the ship of the desert lands.

Farming is done in the eastern parts where there is some rainfall. Indira Gandhi Canal is also making water available for irrigation in many districts.

Farming, goat rearing, mining and tourism provide most of the earnings in the State.

People are brave and hard working. They wear bright clothes. Teej and Gangaur are popular festivals.

Rajasthan has a rich tradition of folk dances.

The cities are a big tourist attraction for their forts, festivals and palaces.