



## JAMMU, KASHMIR & LADAKH AT A GLANCE

The Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir and Union Territory of Ladakh are situated within the Himalayan mountain system forming the northern most part of India. These Union Territories are blessed with lofty snow-clad peaks, deep gorges, glaciers, lush green meadows and beautiful valleys full of Chinar trees, fresh water lakes, plenty of flora and fauna. In this chapter physiography, climate, natural vegetation and drainage have been discussed, which are important attributes of the geography of a place.

### A. Physiography

The Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir and the Union Territory of Ladakh have been divided into following six physical divisions:

- I. The Outer Plains.
- II. The Shiwaliks.
- III. The Middle Himalayas.
- IV. The Valley of Kashmir
- V. The Greater Himalayas.
- VI. The Ladakh Region.

#### I. The Outer Plains:-

The Outer Plains are part of the Northern Plains of India. These plains stretch from River Ravi to the River Chenab for a distance of 110 km, with an elevation of 330m to 360m above mean sea

level; covering parts of Jammu region like Akhnoor, Ranbir Singh Pura, Samba and Kathua. These plains are highly fertile and are known for the cultivation of rice and wheat

**Do You Know?**

*Physiography is the study of relief features*

**II. The Shiwaliks:-**

Towards north of the Outer Plains lies the youngest mountains of the sub-continent called Shiwalik Hills. These mountains are 20-50 kms wide and 600-1220 meters above the mean sea level. Jammu- the City of Temples and the two famous lakes Mansar and Surinsar lie in the vicinity of these mountains. The rolling slopes between Ravi and Chenab Rivers are called Kandi.

**Do You Know?**

*Ranbir Singh Pura is known for cultivation of high quality Basmati rice.*

**III. The Middle Himalayas:-**

The Middle Himalayas are located between River Ravi in the East and Poonch in the West. The elevation of this physiographic division is between 1820 to 3600 meters above mean sea level with width of about 10 to 60 kms across. They are covered by forests of Deodar, Pine and Fir. Jammu-Srinagar National Highway passes through these mountains at Patnitop. Some of the important towns of this region are Banihal, Ramban, Kishtwar, Doda, Batote and Rajouri.



Fig: 9.1 View of the Kishtwar Town



Fig: 2 Kashmir Valley

#### Do you know?

**Valley** - A low area of land between the hills or mountains typically with a river/stream flowing through

#### Do you know?

'K2' or 'Godwin Austin' is the world's second highest peak in Karakoram range'.

#### IV. The Valley of Kashmir:-

The bowl-shaped Valley of Kashmir situated in the north-western part of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is flanked by the Pir-Panjal Range from South and West and the Greater Himalayas on North and East. The valley is around 130 Kms long and 40 Kms wide. River Jhelum is the main river of the valley. Lidder Valley, Sind Valley and the Lolab Valley are some other important side valleys in this region.

#### V. The Greater Himalayas:-

The Greater Himalayas form the northern flank of the valley with an average elevation of 600 meters above mean sea level. Nanga Parbat is the highest mountain peak of this region in Greater Himalayas. Zojila and Razdan Pass are the important passes connecting valley with Ladakh and Gurez respectively. The famous Amarnath cave is also situated in this range.

#### VI. The Ladakh Region:

The Ladakh region is the cold desert having very low rainfall (less than 25 cm per annum) and scanty vegetation. River Indus is the main river of this region. Leh town is situated in its vicinity at about 3500 meters above mean sea level. Summers are short and warm, winters are long and extremely cold. The coldest place Drass, where the temperature during the winters falls below -40°C is located in this region. Sindh valley, Drass, Kargil, Zaskar region, Nubra valley and Chanthang region are important divisions of Ladakh plateau.



**B. CLIMATE :** The climate of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir and the Union Territory of Ladakh varies considerably with its topography. The Southern parts of Jammu reflect a humid Sub-tropical (Monsoon type) climate. June is the hottest month with a temperature ranging upto 45 degree centigrade. Hot and dry winds locally known as 'Loo' blow in the afternoon during summer. January is the coldest month in the plains of Jammu with temperature ranging between 5-10°C.

The Valley of Kashmir along with some hilly areas of Jammu experience modified temperate type of climate. July is the hottest month and January is the coldest month which is locally known as period of 'Chille-Kalan' and temperature during this period can dip down to -10 to -20°C (40 days of intense cold from 21 December to 31 January).

Ladakh experiences a very dry climate. Cold desert conditions prevail in this region. Ladakh receives a very little amount of precipitation throughout the year. Precipitation is mainly in the form of snowfall. January is the coldest month in Ladakh, Here the lowest temperature goes deep below freezing point upto - 40°C at Drass .

#### Do you know?

**Weather** – is the day-to-day state of the atmospheric conditions for a particular area. (Temperature, rainfall and humidity etc.)

**Climate-** The weather conditions that prevail over a large area and for a longer period of time.

#### Do you know?

Siachin is the largest glacier in Ladakh region with a length of appx. 65-75 kms.

#### Fact file of the seasons:

Seasons	Period	Jammu	Kashmir Native Term	Ladakh
Spring	16 <sup>th</sup> March -15 <sup>th</sup> May	Bahaar	Sonth	Spit
Summer	16 <sup>th</sup> May -15 <sup>th</sup> July	Soha	Grishm	Yar
Rainy	16 <sup>th</sup> July – 15 <sup>th</sup> September	Barsaant	Waharat	*
Autumn	16 <sup>th</sup> Sept. – 15 <sup>th</sup> Nov.	Patjhar	Harud	Ston
Winter	16 <sup>th</sup> Nov. – 15 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Syaala	Wandah	Goon
Ice cold	16 <sup>th</sup> Jan-15 <sup>th</sup> March	*	Shishur	*

(Note:- \* - Seasons not found)



### **C. VEGETATION AND WILD LIFE (FLORA AND FAUNA)**

The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is well endowed with the natural vegetation. Its natural vegetation has great diversity in flora, ranging from the lush green margs (Alpine Pastures) to evergreen conifers on gentle slopes of high altitudes. Scrub forest cover southern slopes of Shiwalik foot hills and deciduous forest are found on the southern slopes of Shiwalik and Pir-Pinjal range. The high-altitude desert land of Ladakh owing to low rainfall is largely dominated by Xerophytic vegetation. The natural tree elements are largely absent except for the more humid regions of Nubra valley and all river valleys present in Ladakh. The main types of forests found in the Union Territories are:

- a. Sub –tropical dry deciduous forests
- b. Sub-tropical pine forests
- c. Himalayan moist temperate forests
- d. Himalayan dry temperate forests
- e. Alpine forests



**Fig 9.3:** Pine forests in Warwan Valley of Kishtwar



The common types of trees found in Jammu region are Kikar (Acacia), Ber, Shisham, Pipal, Banyan, Mango and Palm. Chir, Deodar, Spruce, Maple Oak, Walnut and Poplar are found in Kashmir. Junipers, Firs and Rhododendron grow at higher altitudes of Ladakh.

The willow, mulberry and walnut trees provide raw materials required for the development of sports goods, furniture and wood artefacts. Many people earn their livelihood from these forest-based industries. Forests also provide turpentine and a variety of resins, used in several chemical industries. Resin is collected from the pine trees.

**D. MAJOR RIVERS** – Major rivers flowing through these Union Territories are - The Indus in Ladakh, the Chenab in Jammu region and the Jhelum in Kashmir Valley.

**E. LANGUAGES** – Prominent languages spoken in these Union Territories are Kashmiri, Urdu, Dogri, Punjabi, Pahari, Bhoti, Balti, Gojri, Shina, Siraji, Dardi, Pashto etc.

**F. WILD LIFE** – Wild life in the entire region is colourful and diverse. Black-necked Crane, Peacock, Ducks, Parakeets, Cranes and Pigeons are some birds inhabiting the forests and wet lands of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir. The Union Territory of Ladakh is the home of yak, the shaggy horned wild ox weighing around one tonne, the Tibetan antelope, and the Kiang (Tibetan wild ass). Furthermore, the Ibex, Bear, Snow leopard and very rare Red panda are found in certain pockets. “Dachigam National Park” in Srinagar is abode of Hangul. It is a rare and unique species of Deer not found anywhere in the world.

### Let's do

Find out the local names of the trees found in your surroundings

e.g. Deodar-  
Deyhar.

### Do you know?

The Shyok River is one of the tributary of Indus River in Ladakh region and flows through Nubra valley and is generally known as River of Death.



Fig. 9.4 Black necked Crane



Fig. 9.5 Hangul



## EXERCISES

### 1. Answer the following questions briefly.

- What are the various physiographic divisions of the two Union Territories?
- Name the important rivers flowing through the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir and the Union Territory of Ladakh?
- What are the languages spoken in different areas of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir and Union Territory of Ladakh?
- Name the coldest place in the Union Territory of Ladakh?

### 2. Tick the correct answers.

- The largest glacier in the north west Himalayas is -  
1) Kolhai                      2) Siachin                      3) Thajwas
- Waharat* is a local name for which of the seasons in ——— Kashmir.  
1) Rainy season              2) Winter season      3) Spring season
- Dachigam National Park is in –  
1) Srinagar      2) Ladakh                      3) Bhadarwah

### 3. Match the Following

Indus River

Kashmir Valley

Chenab River

Ladakh

River Jhelum

Jammu

Suru River

Kargil



- Make a list of trees/animals in your neighbourhood. Collect pictures and paste them in your notebook.