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## The Northern Plains

In this lesson, we will learn about :

- Location of the Northern Plains
- The three river basins – Satluj, Ganga and Brahmaputra
- The states that lie in the Northern Plains of India

The Northern Plains lie between the Himalayas and the Southern Plateaus. The flat and level Northern Plains stretch from Punjab in the west to Assam in the east. They cover almost the whole of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, West Bengal,

parts of Bihar and Assam. The Northern Plains are very fertile plains, rich in alluvial soil in most parts. Important cities in the Northern Plains are Amritsar, Delhi, Agra, Kanpur, Lucknow, Allahabad, Varanasi, Patna, Kolkata, Guwahati and Chandigarh.



India: The Northern plains

## Himalayan Rivers

Many rivers which start from the Himalayas flow through this region. Some of these are Satluj, Ganga, Brahmaputra and Yamuna. They carry mountain soil called silt or alluvium and deposit it on their banks. These are snow-fed rivers, so they have water throughout the year.

The Northern Plains are the largest and most fertile plains of the world. This area is called the '**Rice Bowl of India**' as most of the India's rice is grown here.

## Division of the Northern Plains

The Northern Plains have three important rivers – the Satluj, the Ganga and the Brahmaputra. They divide the Plains into three river basins. A river basin is an area watered by a river and its tributaries. The three river basins in India are :

- ┆ Satluj River Basin
- ┆ Ganga River Basin
- ┆ Brahmaputra River Basin.

## Satluj River Basin

The Satluj and the Beas flow in the south-west direction. They join the Indus river in Pakistan. The Indus flows into the Arabian Sea.

Punjab and Haryana lie in the Satluj Basin. The Bhakra Dam has been built on the Satluj river. It provides water for irrigation. Electricity is also produced at the Bhakra Dam.



Bhakra Dam

Punjab and Haryana are the two states which get water and electricity from the Bhakra Dam.

## Ganga River Basin

The Ganga river originates as Bhagirathi from the Gangotri glacier in the Himalayan Mountains. It flows at a high speed from the mountain slopes. On its way down, it is joined by the rivers Mandakini and Alaknanda. These three rivers combine to form the Ganga. The Ganga enters the Northern Plains near Rishikesh.

The Yamuna river which is the main tributary of the Ganga also starts from the Himalayas.

There are a number of rivers which flow from the Himalayas and join the mainstream of the Ganga. These include the Ghaghara, Gomti, Gandak and Kosi.

The Yamuna joins Ganga at a place near **Allahabad**. This place is called **Sangam**. There is another tributary 'Sone' that joins the Ganga near Patna.



Pilgrims taking a holy bath at Sangam, Allahabad

The Ganga flows through the states of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal. After reaching West Bengal, it is diverted towards south and splits into several branches. Many of them join the Brahmaputra river after passing through Bangladesh, our neighbouring country.

In West Bengal, the Ganga flows slowly and splits into two branches — the Hugli and the Padma. The branch of the Ganga in Bangladesh is known as Padma.

The **Hugli** is the main branch of the Ganga in India. It flows through West Bengal. Kolkata, the capital of West Bengal, is situated on the banks of the Hugli.



The Hugli River in Kolkata

## Brahmaputra River Basin

The Brahmaputra is the longest of the three rivers of north India. It starts in Tibet, where it is called **Tsangpo**. It enters India through Arunachal Pradesh and flows through Assam before entering Bangladesh. The Ganga and the Brahmaputra, before falling into the Bay of Bengal, form the largest **delta** in the world. It is called **Sunderbans**.

A delta is low lying, flat area found at the mouth of a river and is formed of deposits of alluvium brought by the river.



The Brahmaputra River

Many cities exist along the banks of these rivers. Some of the important cities include Delhi along Yamuna, Kolkata along Hugli and Kanpur, Allahabad, Patna, Varanasi along Ganga. Many goods are produced in the factories which are located in these cities. But the harmful wastes from these factories are discharged into the rivers. This makes the river water dirty. It becomes unfit for drinking and other uses. The government has started a project to clean the Ganga river and prevent its further pollution. This is known as the Ganga Action Plan.



Industrial waste falling into the Ganga

The plains of the Indus, Ganga and Brahmaputra rivers have been inhabited by people since early times. The states of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and National Capital Territory of Delhi lie in this region. Parts of Assam also lie in this region.

## Punjab

Punjab is called the Land of Five Rivers because five rivers flowed in this state. The western part of Punjab became a part of Pakistan in 1947, after the Partition of India. Now only three main rivers flow through the Indian part of Punjab — Beas, Ravi, Satluj. Punjab lies in the western part of the Northern Plains.

Modern methods of farming, irrigation facilities and hard-working people have made it a prosperous state. Farming is the main occupation of people. It is rich in crops such as wheat, rice, maize and oilseeds.

Men wear *dhoti*, *kurta* and *lungi*, while women wear *salwar-kameez* and *dupatta*.



Women in Punjabi Dress

The people of Punjab speak **Punjabi** and **Hindi**. They eat makke-ki-roti and *sarson-ka-saag* in winters. **Baisakhi** and **Guruparvas** are important festivals of Punjab. Folk dances of Punjab are *Bhangra* and *Gidda*. Jalandhar, Ludhiana and Amritsar are important cities of Punjab. **Chandigarh**, a union territory, is the capital of Punjab and Haryana.



Golden Temple

Jalandhar is famous for sports goods. Ludhiana is known for hosiery and woollen goods. Amritsar and Dhariwal are important centres of woollen products. Amritsar is also famous for the Golden Temple. It is the holiest place of pilgrimage for the Sikhs.

## Haryana

Haryana means the 'abode of God'. It shares boundaries with Punjab, Rajasthan, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh.

Farming, including dairy farming are the main occupations of the people. Major crops grown here are wheat, rice, maize, pulses and sugarcane. There is a big dairy farm and research centre at **Karnal**. A big cattle fair is held at **Hissar** every year.

Gurugram is famous for automobile industries, mainly cars such as Maruti. Faridabad is an industrial town located nearby. Sonapat is famous for bicycles while Panipat is famous for handloom clothes.

Women wear *ghaghra*, *choli* and *odhni*. The men wear *dhoti* and *kurta*. *Haryanvi* and Hindi are the languages spoken by the people. *Roti*, *dal*, curd and milk are the main foods eaten in Haryana. *Teej* is the main festival celebrated in the state.



Regional dress of Haryana



Karnal Dairy



Maruti Udyog factory at Gurugram

## Uttar Pradesh

Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state. It has very fertile soil. So most of the people practise farming. The main crops grown are wheat, rice, sugarcane, oilseeds and pulses. Cotton textiles, sugar, glass, leather and fertilisers are the main products of factories located here. Kanpur, Noida, Ghaziabad, Meerut are important industrial towns. The world famous Taj Mahal is in Agra. **Banaras silk** and **Luckhnawi chikan** embroidery are very famous. Women wear sarees while men wear *dhoti*, *kurta* or *kurta-pyjama*. *Dal*, *roti* and vegetables are the staple diet. People speak Hindi and Urdu.



Taj Mahal

The main festivals are **Eid**, **Shivratri** and **Janamashtami**. **Lucknow** is the capital. Allahabad is the centre of Kumbha Mela.



A scene of Kumbha Mela

## West Bengal

West Bengal is one of the important states of India. Most of the people are farmers and fishermen. Fish and rice is the staple food. Saree is the main dress of Bengali women. They are very fond of music and love to stage plays. Men wear *dhoti kurta*. People speak **Bengali**. **Durga Puja** is the main festival of West Bengal. The famous **Shantiniketan** founded by Rabindranath Tagore is located in West Bengal. **Kolkata** is the capital city.



Durga Puja is the main festival of West Bengal

## Delhi

Delhi is the capital of India. It is known as the National Capital Territory of Delhi. It is the seat of the Central Government. It is a cosmopolitan city and represents a mixed culture. It has people from all regions, religions and castes, speaking various languages and

following various customs. Most of them are employed in government offices, schools and private firms. **Hindi** and **English** are the main languages spoken here.



Akshardham Mandir

Delhi has many historical buildings like Red Fort, Qutub Minar, Old Fort, Rashtrapati Bhawan. Some of the famous temples are Birla Temple, Lotus Temple, Chhatarpur Temple and Akshardham Temple. All these places are thronged by devotees. The people of Delhi celebrate all festivals. The Republic Day and Independence Day celebrations in Delhi are the main attractions. Delhi Metro Rail is the chief mode of transportation in Delhi.

## Bihar

Bihar has played an important role in Indian history in ancient period. Lord Mahavira was born here and Lord Buddha received enlightenment at Bodh Gaya. India's first President and famous freedom fighter Dr. Rajendra Prasad belonged to Bihar.

Chief crops grown here are rice, wheat, sugarcane and pulses.

People speak *Hindi*, *Maithili* and *Bhojpuri*. **Patna** on the banks of Ganga is the capital of Bihar. Dussehra, Holi, Diwali, Chhath and Eid are the main festivals of Bihar.



Chhath Puja

## Jharkhand

The capital of Jharkhand is **Ranchi**. Jharkhand was carved out of Bihar in the year 2000. Dhanbad, Jharia, Bokaro and Jamshedpur are other important towns of Jharkhand. Jharkhand is very rich in minerals like iron, coal and bauxite.

## Assam

Assam is in the north-east of India. Rice and jute are the main crops. Assam is famous for its tea. Assam has huge deposits of petroleum.

**Dispur** is the capital of Assam. Guwahati is the largest city. Assamese is the main language and Bihu is the main festival.

The Kaziranga National Park in Assam is famous for its one-horned rhinoceros.



Kaziranga National Park

## Tripura

Tripura is surrounded by Bangladesh on three sides. **Agartala** is the capital of Tripura. Rice and jute are the main crops.



5. Shantiniketan, a famous educational institution in West Bengal, was founded by  
(a) Dwarkanath Tagore      (b) Rabindranath Tagore   (c) Vivekananda
6. Lord Buddha attained enlightenment in  
(a) Bihar                              (b) Punjab                              (c) Haryana
7. Chhath is the main festival of  
(a) West Bengal                      (b) Bihar                              (c) Haryana
8. The capital of Jharkhand is  
(a) Ranchi                              (b) Bokaro                              (c) Dhanbad

**B. Match the following columns.**

- |                      |                 |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Kumbh Mela        | (a) Delhi       |
| 2. Durga Puja        | (b) Bihar       |
| 3. Gidda             | (c) Assam       |
| 4. Teej              | (d) Punjab      |
| 5. Akshardham Temple | (e) Allahabad   |
| 6. Maithili          | (f) West Bengal |
| 7. Bihu              | (g) Haryana     |

**C. Fill in the blanks. Choose words from the box.**

Minerals   
 Haryana   
 Karnal   
 Amritsar   
 Bihar   
 Assam

1. Dispur is the capital of \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Lord Mahavira was born in \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Jharkhand is very rich in \_\_\_\_\_.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ means the abode of God.
5. A big dairy farm and dairy research centre is situated at \_\_\_\_\_ in Haryana.
6. The Golden Temple is situated in \_\_\_\_\_.

**D. Write T for the true and F for the false statements.**

1. Delhi is the seat of the Central Government.
2. Uttar Pradesh is the least populous state.
3. Gurugram is famous for cycles.
4. Ludhiana is famous for hosiery.
5. People of Punjab speak Punjabi and Hindi.
6. Baisakhi and Guruparva are the main festivals of Jharkhand.
7. Padma is a branch of Yamuna.



### E. Answer these questions.

1. Name the three river basins of the Northern plains.
2. Which three rivers combine to form the Ganga in upper reaches of the Himalayas?
3. How is the Sunderbans formed?
4. Describe the popular food, dress and festivals of Punjab.
5. Why sangam at Allahabad is considered an important holy place? [VALUE BASED QUESTION]
6. Describe the popular food, dress and festivals of West Bengal.
7. Describe the historical significance of Delhi. [HOTS]



### MAP WORK

Locate and label all the states, their capitals and Union territories situated in the Northern Plains. Use a political outline map of India.



### DO AND LEARN

F. Make a colourful chart on any one of the states of the Northern Plains. Paste relevant pictures. You can include the following.

- ┆ Food
- ┆ Dress
- ┆ Festivals
- ┆ Crops
- ┆ Dances
- ┆ Monuments
- ┆ Tourist spots

G. Make a list of wildlife sanctuaries, national parks and bird sanctuaries located in the fertile Northern plains of India.



### SURF AND LEARN

[www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indo-Gangetic\\_plain](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indo-Gangetic_plain)

[http://www.bukisa.com/articles/290883\\_the-ganga-basin-is-called-the-food-bowl-of-India](http://www.bukisa.com/articles/290883_the-ganga-basin-is-called-the-food-bowl-of-India)



### LIFE SKILLS

#### SOCIAL & THINKING

There are so many historical monuments in the Northern plains of India. You may plan to visit them. Prepare a list of Dos and Don'ts which you want to follow while visiting these monuments.