Physiography of India

1. Main Physiographic Divisions:

India can be divided into 5 major physiographical divisions

* The Himalayan Mountains
* The Great Indian Plains
* The peninsular Plateau
* The Coastal Plains
* The Indian Islands

2. The Himalayan Mountains

2.1 Introduction

* Youngest and loftiest mountain chain in the world
* Stretches over 2400Km (22° longitude)
* Width varies from 500km in Kashmir to 200Km in Arunachal Pradesh
* Area covered 5 Lakh Km2
* Pamir knot is the connecting link between Himalayas and the high ranges of central Asia

2.2 Physiographic Divisions of the Himalayas – Divided into 3 parts

2.2.1 The Himalayan Ranges

2.2.1.1 The Shiwaliks

* Outer Himalayas
* Hogback appearance with steep southern slopes
* **Width** varies from 50 Km in Himachal Pradesh to 15 Km in Arunachal Pradesh
* **Altitude** varies from 600-1500 m.
* Gorges of Tista and Raidak have jointly formed a gap of 80-90 Km, in the otherwise unbroken range
* This range at some point obstructed courses of river draining from higher reaches and lakes were created
* These lakes drained out after the rivers carved out a course through the Shiwaliks
* ‘Duns’or ‘Doons’left behind in the West and ‘Duars’in the East.
* The southern slopes of this range in Punjab and Himachal Pradesh, are completely devoid of forests, and are dissected by several seasonal streams called ‘Chos’
* The Shiwaliks are **known by different names** in different regions
  + Jammu Hills in Kashmir
  + Dhang, Dhundwa in Uttarakhand
  + Churiaghat in Nepal
  + Miri, Dafa, Abor, Mishmi in Arunachal Pradesh

2.2.1.2 The Himachals

* Intricate system of ranges 60-80 Km wide
* Altitude varying from 3500-4500 m.
* Steep, bare southern slopes and gentle forested northern slopes
* Important ranges are
  + Pir Panjal (Kashmir)
  + Dhauladhar (Himachal Pradesh)
  + Moussourie, Nag Tibba (Uttarakhand)
  + Mahabharat, Lekh (Nepal)
* Pir Panjal range extends from the Jhelum river to the upper Beas river (300-400 Km)
* It is separated from the Zanskar range by the Kashmir valley (135 Km long 40 Km wide)
* Other notable valleys are Kangra, Kullu (Himachal Pradesh) and Kathmandu valley (Nepal)