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## Chapter – 10 Geography

### Life in the Deserts

- Desert is an arid region characterized by extremely high or low temperatures and has scarce vegetation.
  - Depending on the temperature, there can be hot deserts or cold deserts.
  - **The Hot Desert-Sahara:**
    - (i) Sahara Desert in Africa is the world's largest hot desert.
    - (ii) It touches 11 countries and has got gravel plains and elevated plateaus with bare rocky surface.
    - (iii) The climate of Sahara is scorching hot and parch dry with temperature as high as 50°C.
    - (iv) The nights are freezing cold with temperature nearing zero degrees.
    - (v) Vegetation in the Sahara Desert includes cactus, date palms and acacia. Camels, hyenas, jackals, foxes, scorpions, snakes and lizards are the main animal species found here.
    - (vi) Despite its harsh climate, Sahara is inhabited by various groups of people. The main groups are Bedouins and Tuaregs.
    - (vii) The oasis in the Sahara and the Nile Valley in Egypt supports settled population.
    - (viii) The discovery of oil is constantly transforming this region. Other important minerals found here are iron, phosphorus, manganese and uranium.
    - (ix) More and more nomadic tribes are taking to city life.
  - **The Cold-Desert-Ladakh:**
    - (i) Ladakh is a cold desert lying in the Great Himalayas, on the eastern side of Jammu and Kashmir.
    - (ii) The altitude in Ladakh varies from 3,000 m in Kargil to more than 8,000 m in Karakoram.
    - (iii) The area experiences freezing winds and burning hot sunlight.
    - (iv) Due to high aridity, the vegetation is sparse. Groves of willows and poplars are seen in the valleys.
    - (v) The animals of Ladakh are wild goats, wild sheep, yak and special kinds of dogs.
    - (vi) The animals are reared as they provide milk, meat and hides.
    - (vii) The population consists of either Muslims or Buddhists.
    - (viii) Some famous Buddhist monasteries are Hemis, Thiksey, Shey and Lamayuru.
    - (ix) In summer season, the people are busy cultivating barley, potatoes, peas, beans and turnips.
    - (x) Tourism is a major activity with several tourists streaming in from within India and abroad.
    - (xi) People of Ladakh have over the centuries learnt to live in balance and harmony with nature.
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