

## Chapter – 7: Life in the Deserts

- Places – no fresh water – no fodder (grass) for cattle – difficult to live
- Some places – hot as fire – some – cold as ice – desert areas
- Characteristics – low rainfall – low vegetation – extreme temperatures

### The Hot Desert – Sahara

- Sahara – covers a large part of North Africa – world's largest desert
- Area – 8.54 million sq. km
- Sahara Desert – touches 11 countries – Algeria, Chad, Egypt, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Sudan, Tunisia, Western Sahara
- Type of lands –
  - Huge stretches of sand
  - Gravel plains
  - Elevated plateaus – rocky surface – upto 2500 m high



### Climate

- Very hot and dry – short rainy season
- Sky – cloudless and clear
- Moisture – evaporates faster
- Day time – high temperatures – upto 50<sup>0</sup> C – heats up the sand and rocks – heats the entire environment
- Night time – freezing cold – near 0<sup>0</sup> C

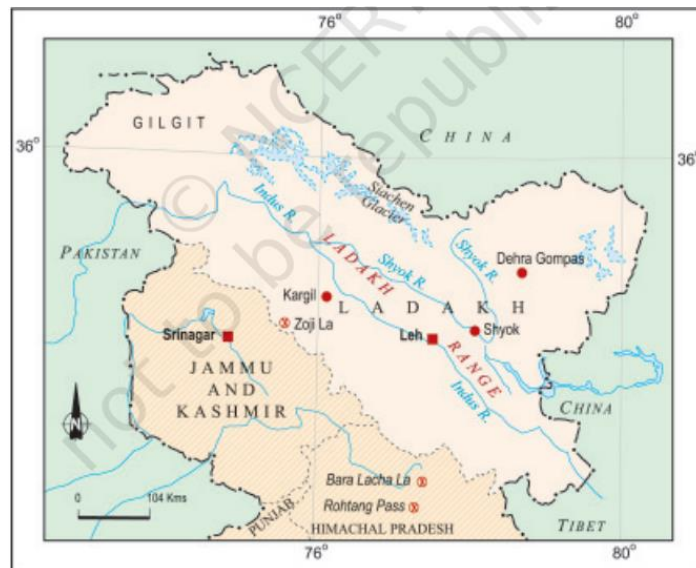
### Flora and fauna

- Vegetation – cactus, date, palms, acacia
- Some places – oasis – green islands in the middle of the desert
- Animals – camels, hyenas, jackals, foxes, scorpions, snakes, lizards

## People

- Various groups of people – various activities
- Bedouins, Tuaregs – nomadic tribes – rear (look after) livestock – goats, sheep, camels, horses
- These animals – provide milk – skin (leather belts, slippers, etc) – hairs (mats, carpets, clothes, etc)
- People – wear heavy robes – protection from dust and hot winds
- Oasis in Sahara – Nile Valley in Egypt – settled population
- Water available – people grow date palms – other crops – rice, wheat, barley, beans, cotton
- Discovery of oil – Algeria, Libya, Egypt – changing the Sahara Desert
- Other minerals – iron, phosphorus, manganese, uranium
- Cultural landscape – constantly changing
- Glass building over mosques – superhighways through the desert
- Trucks – replacing camels – salt trade
- Tuaregs – work as guides to foreign tourists
- Many nomadic people – started working in oil and gas companies – city life

## The Cold Desert – Ladakh



- Ladakh – cold desert – in the Himalayas – eastern side of Jammu and Kashmir
- **Karakoram range** – in the north – **Zaskar mountains** – in the south
- Several rivers flow through here – **Indus** – most imp.
- Rivers form deep valleys and gorges – many glaciers also found here – example – **Gangri** glacier
- Altitude – varies – 3000 m in **Kargil** to more than 8000 m in Karakoram
- High altitude – climate – very cold – air – very thin
- Summers – day temperature – near 0<sup>0</sup> C – night temperature – below -30<sup>0</sup> C
- Winters – most of the time – temperature – below -40<sup>0</sup> C
- Very little rainfall – lies in the rain shadow of Himalayas
- Freezing winds – burning hot sunlight
- Sit in sunlight – feet in the shade – both sunstroke and frost bite at same time

## Flora and fauna

- Low availability of water – vegetation – very low
- Small patches of grasses – animals graze here

- Forests of willows and poplars – available here
- Summers – fruit trees – apples, apricots, walnuts
- Many bird species – robins, redstarts, Tibetan snowcock, raven, hoopoe – some – migratory birds
- Animals – wild goats, wild sheep, yak, dogs, etc
- Animals are reared – provide milk, meat, hides (skin)
- Yak's milk – make cheese and butter
- Hair of sheep and goat – make woolens

**People**

- Muslims and Buddhists – high population
- Many Buddhist monasteries – present here – Hemis, Thiksey, Shey, Lamayuru
- Summers – people cultivate – barley, potatoes, peas, beans, turnip
- Winters – climate – very difficult – people – celebrate festivals and perform ceremonies
- Women – very hardworking – work in houses and fields – also manage small businesses and shops
- Leh – capital of Ladakh – well connected – air and land routes
- National Highway 1A – connects Leh to Kashmir – through Zoji La pass
- Tourism – major activity – Indian and foreign tourists
  - Visit to monasteries (gompas)
  - Treks to glaciers and green patches
  - Witnessing ceremonies and festivities
- Life is changing – BUT – people of Ladakh – adapted to nature