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Geographical Diversity of India

Questions and activities

1. **What, in your opinion, are two important geographical features of India? Why do you think they are important?**

Ans. Two important geographical features of India are the Himalayas and the Ganges River.

- **Himalayas:** The Himalayas are important because they act as a natural barrier, protecting India from cold winds from Central Asia. They also influence the monsoon rains, which are crucial for agriculture in India. The mountains have rich biodiversity and are culturally significant.
- **Ganges River:** The Ganges is considered sacred and is a major source of water for millions of people. It provides water for irrigation, transportation, and sustains large populations in the northern plains. The river's basin is highly fertile and supports extensive agriculture.

2. **What do you think India might have looked like if the Himalayas did not exist? Write a short note or sketch a drawing to express your imagination.**

Ans. Without the Himalayas, India would likely have a much hotter and more arid climate, especially in the northern parts. There would be no natural barrier to the cold winds from the north, and the weather could have been harsher. Additionally, India would be more vulnerable to invasions from Central Asia and beyond. The Ganges and other rivers might have had different courses without the Himalayas acting as a water source. The landscape would be flatter, and there might not be the same level of rainfall, affecting agriculture and biodiversity.

3. **India has been called a 'mini-continent'. Based on what you've read, why do you think this is so?**

Ans. India is called a 'mini-continent' because of its immense geographical diversity. It has a wide range of landforms, including mountains, deserts, plateaus, and coastal areas. The climate and vegetation also vary from region to region, from tropical in the south to temperate in the north. India also has a wide range of cultural and linguistic diversity, making it resemble a continent in its own right.

4. **Follow one of India's big rivers from where it starts to where it meets the ocean. What are the different ways in which people might utilise this river along its journey? Discuss in groups in your class.**

Ans. Let's take the Ganges River as an example:

- **Starting Point:** The Ganges originates from the Himalayas and is used for religious purposes by people who take pilgrimages to the river.
- **Intermediate Uses:** In its journey, the river is utilized for agriculture as the water is used for irrigation. People also use the river for transportation and fishing.
- **Meeting the Ocean:** When the Ganges meets the Bay of Bengal, its delta is a hub for fishing and agricultural activities. The river's estuaries are also important for biodiversity, with mangroves supporting marine life.
- **Along its journey,** the Ganges is a vital resource for drinking water, agriculture, and industry.

5. Why is the southern part of India referred to as a peninsular plateau?

Ans. The southern part of India is called a peninsular plateau because it is a large, raised, flat area of land that is surrounded by water on three sides. This region consists of the Deccan Plateau, which is a vast, elevated landmass bordered by the Western and Eastern Ghats and the sea on the sides.

6. Which UNESCO Heritage Site mentioned in this chapter did you find more interesting? Write a short paragraph to describe what about it is interesting.

Ans. The Khajuraho Group of Monuments is a UNESCO World Heritage Site that I find fascinating. These temples are known for their intricate and beautifully carved sculptures depicting daily life, deities, and various other themes. The artwork is a perfect example of ancient Indian architecture and art, showcasing the skill and creativity of the artisans of that time. The temples are also a testament to the cultural and religious diversity of India.

7. Look at the two maps of India, physical as well as political, given at the end of this book. Identify the place you are at now. Which physical feature of India would you use to describe its location?

Ans. The answer will vary based on the student's current location in India. For example, if the student is in Delhi, they would use the northern plains and Himalayan foothills as key physical features to describe the location. If in Mumbai, they would refer to the Western Ghats and the coastal plains.

8. Food preservation techniques differ from place to place across India. They are adapted to local conditions. Do a class project. Gather different methods of preserving food. Hint: Drying vegetables when they are in season for use during the off-season.

Ans. Some common food preservation techniques used across India include:

- **Drying:** In many places, vegetables, fruits, and fish are dried to preserve them for the off-season. For example, sun-drying tomatoes and mangoes is common in several regions.
- **Pickling:** In the southern and western parts of India, pickling is widely used, with ingredients like mango, lime, and even chili being pickled with spices and oils.
- **Smoking:** In northeastern India, meat and fish are often smoked to preserve them.
- **Fermentation:** In some parts of India, foods like idli, dosa, and certain alcoholic beverages are made through fermentation.

These techniques depend on the climate, resources, and culture of each region.

9. Despite having such different regions (mountains, deserts, plains, coasts), India remains one country. How do you think our geography has helped unite people?

Ans. India's geography, despite its diversity, has played a role in uniting the people through shared resources and trade. The river systems, such as the Ganges and the Godavari, connect regions that might otherwise be isolated. The mountains, though a physical barrier, also form natural boundaries that provide a sense of identity and security. The vast coastal regions and fertile plains have facilitated trade and interaction across different regions, leading to cultural exchanges and unity. Additionally, the geography has helped in the development of a strong agricultural base, contributing to the country's economy and social cohesion.