Social Science
Part-I
Geography
Indian Subcontinent

India appears as an independent geographical region situated in south of Asia. In North-West of India lies the Kirthar, Sulaiman and Hindukush Mountain ranges, from where the Himalayan ranges extend up to the North-East. Aarakhan Yoma mountain ranges are located in North east, which runs in western Myanmar, parallel to the coast of Bay of Bengal from South to North and touches the Himalayas. These high and insurmountable mountain ranges separate the Indian subcontinent from rest of Asia. Southern India is a peninsula surrounded by Bay of Bengal in the East, Arabian Sea in the and west and Indian Ocean in the South. This region of southern Asia is called Indian subcontinent because from all directions it is impermeable and is insurmountable. A vast continuous land mass surrounded by water on all four sides is called a continent. While, A part of continent which is complete from geographical, cultural and environmental point of view is called a subcontinent. Identify the Indian subcontinent from the following map.

From the above map, it is clear that Indian subcontinent is a special region of Asian continent from geographical point of view.
Its geographical position and shape provides specific monsoon climate to it, and because of this, it is also known as 'Monsoon region.'

The Himalayan ranges in the North are helpful for rainfall in Indian subcontinent and also protects it from the cold Siberian winds. In the absence of Himalayas and Hindukush mountains, Indian subcontinent would have been a vast desert. The rivers originating from these mountains have formed the vast Ganga, Sindhu and Brahmaputra plains, where ancient Indus and Ganga valley civilizations had developed.

Many narrow valleys and passes are present in between the high North-West and North-East mountain ranges. Through these passes foreigners reached India in different time period. The main passes are Khaiber and Bolan. The passes in the North lead routes to Tibet. From North-eastern passes foreigners reached north-east and later through the Shyan Plateau of Myanmar spreaded in whole India.

At different time, various human communities came to India along with their culture and tradition. Some mingled with existing communities while others maintained their independent identity. Their different cultures, languages, religious beliefs, working style affected each other during the course of time. In this way, in Indian subcontinent along with cultural development the trend moved towards diversity in culture and dominant civilizations played the role to unite the diverse cultures through the process of give and take.

**Location of India on the World Map:**

India is located in North-East hemisphere. It lies between $8^\circ 40' $ north to $37^\circ 6' $ north latitude and $68^\circ 7' $ east to $97^\circ 5' $ east longitude. The longitudinal expansion of India is approximately $29^\circ $ which create a difference of two hours in the local time of east and west part. $82^\circ 30' $ East longitude which passes from Allahabad is the Standard Time Meridian of India.

From surface area point of view India is the seventh largest country in the world. The total surface area of our country is 32.9 lakh square km, which is 2.47% of the total area of the world. Its expansion from Jammu and Kashmir in the north till Kanya Kumari (Tamil Nadu) in the south is 3214 km and is 2933 km from Arunachal Pradesh in the east to Gujarat in the west. Rajasthan is the largest state and Goa is smallest from the point of view of surface area.

For easier administrative functioning India is divided into 29 states and 7 union territories. Delhi is the capital of India. On 2nd June 2014 Andhra Pradesh was divided and the 29th state of India, Telangana was formed. These states are further divided into districts for easier administration.
Let us do
Answer the following questions after studying the above map.
1. Mark all states and Union Territories in an outline political map of India.
2. Find out the capitals of all states and Union territories with the help of your teacher.
3. Identify and list the states located on the coastal area of India.
4. List the neighbouring countries of India.
Physical region of India

India is a vast country and hence has a number of physical diversities. Somewhere there are high mountains and somewhere flat plains, while somewhere there are uneven plateaus, and somewhere coastal plains, somewhere deserts and somewhere group of islands. Hence, India is divided into six main physical regions, which are as follows:

- North and North-East mountain ranges (Himalaya Mountains)
- The plains of Ganga.
- Southern Peninsula plateau.
- Coastal plains
- Thar Desert
- Island group.

We have studied about coastal plains in chapter 7 of class 7, “Human life in different surroundings” and will study Thar Desert in next chapter. Let us study other regions in this chapter.

North and North-East Mountain Ranges: In North and North-East region of India lies 2500 km long Himalayan mountain ranges. These mountain ranges are youngest and highest ranges in the world. The highest mountain peak of the world is also located here. Because of its height it remains covered with snow, and that’s why known as Himalaya (Him-Snow, Alaya-House i.e. House of snow). It is divided in three consecutive ranges from south to north, Shivalik, Mid Himalayas and in the north is Himadri or Greater Himalayas.

Himalayas extend from North-West to Arunachal Pradesh in East and turns towards South and merges with Patkoi and Naga ranges of North-East Assam-Myanmar mountain ranges.

These mountains make important contributions in continuous water supply for agriculture and other needs of the country. The location and the structure of the Himalayas and the North-East mountain ranges check the humid Monsoon winds from the Arabian Sea and causes rainfall in India. All perennial rivers of North and North-East originate from these mountains. Rich in water resources these mountains are parents to many multipurpose projects which manages water for electricity, irrigation and many densely populated cities. The forest assets of this region consist of huge biodiversities. The slopes have vast tea and fruit gardens, and in the valleys there are flower and vegetable farms. The medicinal herbs of this region are in demand in the whole world. Main center of tourism are situated here.
The occupation of the inhabitants here depends on water and forest resources.
In this region, high deforestation, landslides and soil erosion because of excessive use of other resources, have adversely affected the ecosystem. Rich in natural and human resources this region is now suffering from natural and environmental depletion because of unplanned and thoughtless human activities.

Let us do
Look at the physical map of India and with the help of your teacher identify the consecutive ranges of Himalaya from South to North and write the name of the south most and north most ranges.

The plains of Ganga:- Parallel to the Himalayas, are the plains of Ganga. These plains are made of soil brought by the Ganga, Satluj and Brahmaputra rivers and their tributaries from the Himalayas. This region is the most fertile land because of the new alluvial soil. In India maximum agriculture is done in these plains. This region can be called 'The grain store of India'. The comparatively higher part where flood water does not reach and where old alluvial soil is found is known as 'Bengur' land. Example of such land can be seen in western parts of the plains. On the contrary the region of low land where flood water reaches every year and deposits new alluvial soil is known as 'Khadar'. The example of such land can be seen in eastern parts of the plains. In the piedmont regions of the Himalayas, the thin strip of land covered with pebbles and small stones, is known as 'Bhabar' and marshy lands are called 'Tarai'.

In ancient times different river valley civilization originated and developed in these plains. Factors like flatland, fertile soil, and favourable and sufficient rainfall made these plains the most populated regions of India. Transport and Industries are well developed here.

Southern Peninsular Plateau:- South to the Ganga plains, the triangular shaped southern plateau is also known as 'Peninsular plateau of India'. The area is marked by the Vindhyaeshal ranges in north, Aravallis in north-west, and Western Ghats (Shyadri) in the west. The depleted remains of the Eastern Ghats lie in the east. The Annamalai and Nilgiri Mountain are located in its south. In the rocky and the rough terrain of this region there are many small plateaus like the Deccan and Chotanagpur plateau. These plateaus contain most of the mineral resources of India. The fertile lava soil of the Plateau is favorable for cotton cultivation.

The coastal plains are located on both the sides of southern plateau in the peninsular India. These plains were formed by the many rivers originating from the Ghats and sea activities. The rivers Mahanadi, Godaveri, Krishna, Kaveri, Narmada etc have formed wide plains in their valley through erosion and deposition.
Agriculture is adversely affected in the inner regions of the plateau because of scarcity and irregularity of rainfall. But the use of ancient means of water storage, developed means of irrigation and developed scientific techniques of dry agriculture is slowly ending the dependence of agriculture on rainfall. As a result agriculture has increased as desired.

Dense forests are found here in some regions. This region is also famous for spices besides rubber, tea, and coffee. The large amount of spices available in India had attracted the traders of West Asia and Europe right from the Medivial period. Maximum tribal population resides in the hills and forests of Vindhyachal, Satpuda, Maikal, Chotanagpur and Shyadri mountain ranges.

Let us do
Recognize and list the states located in the plains of Ganga and Peninsular plateau.

Island group:- The island group of India lies in Arabian sea and Bay of Bengal. A group of 247 islands in the Bay of Bengal is known as 'Andaman and Nicobar Island'. The northern group is the Andaman Islands and the southern group is the Nicobar Islands. The only active volcano of India is located on Barren island of Andaman. The Indira Point in Nicobar is the southernmost tip of India. The group of 36 islands in Arabian Sea is called Lakshadweep. Lakshadweep means group of one Lakh islands. This island is famous from tourism point of view.

Cultural Scene:-
India is unique and full of diversities from Kashmir to Kanya Kumari and Arunachal Pradesh to Gujarat. The way man live is called his culture. Civilization is representation of development of physical area while culture is representation of development of mental region. Which means culture is collective interaction of our living styles, thinking, dressing, food, music and dance, religious belief, philosophy, languages and literature. This cultural diversity is our heritage.

Language:-
According to 2001 census there are 122 languages and 234 mother tongues in India. From these 22 languages are given the status of Scheduled Languages in the constitution. Most of these languages are the main language of various states and communities. Mother tongue is the language used by the person’s mother for conversation in his childhood.

In India, different languages are spoken in different regions. Like Punjabi in Panjab, Oriya in Odisha, Tamil in Tamil Nadu, Marathi in Maharashtra and Gujarati in Gujarat etc. Some languages are spoken by a very small community. After independence keeping in mind this diversity in languages the states were reconstituted on the basis of languages, so that every state could officially adopt the local language of their people for government work.
Let us do
Answer the following questions to see the map of India
1. Which language is spoken in maximum states? Write the name of states.
2. Make the list of states according to language spoken in India
Generally the followers of all religions and communities live in India. The main are Hindus (78.8%), Muslims (14.2%), Christians (2.3%), Sikhs (1.7%), Bodhis (0.7%) and Jain (0.4%). The followers of Hindu, Jain and Sikh religion mostly resides in India only. India is the birth place of many religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism etc. The presence of various religions enriches the diverse cultures of the country.

Tribal Group:-
Primordially, when various human communities reached Indian subcontinent and diffused gradually in whole of India then some communities moved to remote area because of various geographical conditions and historical events. These remote areas were situated in mountains and forests. With time the effect of developing river valley civilization on them was very less due to their remote habitats. Therefore they remain backward in comparison to farmers and city societies of plain lands. Such communities living in remote area are known as 'Tribes' in India. Many tribes like Gond, Bheel, Santal, Oraon, Saharia, Naga, Niree, Aadi, Dafia etc resides in west from Gujarat and Rajasthan to 'West Bengal' in east and in far eastern states of India. Their number is zero in plains. This community is weakest in the country from social and economical point of view.

Unity in diversity:-
There are many cultural diversities in India. But the need is we should respect other cultures irrespective of any religion, language, tribe or community to which we belong. India is united despite the many geographical and cultural diversities existing in it. Hence it is said that 'Unity in Diversity is the specialty of India'.

**Glossary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>vast land of common specialty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote</td>
<td>not easy to approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Work done for livelihood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multipurpose</td>
<td>Fulfilling many purposes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exercise

1. Choose the correct answers:
   (1) Which is not the neighboring country of India?
      (a) Nepal  (b) Bhutan  (c) Iran  (d) Myanmar  ( )
   (2) Which is the second largest country of the world in terms of population?
      (a) China  (b) India  (c) America  (d) Japan  ( )

2. Fill in the blanks.
   1. India is ___________ largest country in terms of area.
   2. ___________ is 29th state separated from Andhra Pradesh in 2014.
   3. The group of 36 island in Arabian sea is called as ___________.
   4. Himalayas are highest and ___________ Mountain ranges in the world.

3. Why is India called as subcontinent? Explain reasons.
4. Why are River valley projects said to be multipurpose?
5. Explain affects of Himalayas on climate of India.
6. Which are the main religions of India? List them.
7. In how many geographical regions is India divided? Give their characteristics.
8. Why is India called the land of "Unity in Diversity"? Explain.