

12**NATURAL TOURIST
ATTRACTIONS IN INDIA**

Notes

India is a vast country with immense geographical and cultural diversity. The diversity varies from the Himalayan Mountain in north to coasts in the south and from Thar Desert of Rajasthan in the west to the humid forests of the North-East. Even the climatic conditions vary from the equatorial in the south to the polar region in the higher slope of northern mountain. This rich diversity is bound to create many natural attractions for the tourists visiting these places. The people from plain and Southern India would like to visit the Himalayan hill stations in search of a cool climate during summer. Similarly, people from the north would like to see the coastal areas. This plays a great role in providing opportunities for the development of tourism in the country. Each geographical region has its own beauty. Life has become very hectic and mechanical. People now prefer to go back to nature to refresh themselves. Natural beauty is now very much in demand not only by domestic tourists but also international tourists. In this lesson we shall read about India's geographical features and appreciate what it has to offer to tourists to see, enjoy and appreciate.

**OBJECTIVES**

After studying this lesson, you will be able to:

- describe the physical features of India;
- explain distribution of tourist places in India;
- identify the natural attractions of tourist regions popular with the WildLife;
- describe the different Bird Sanctuaries in India and
- illustrate the various hill stations in India.

12.1 PHYSICAL FEATURES OF INDIA

The physical features of India refer to the physical appearance of the country in terms of altitude, geological history, formation and geographical characteristics. Based on this criterion, India can be divided into four major regions (Fig. 12.1):

1. The Northern Mountains Regions
2. The Great Northern Plains
3. The Peninsular Plateau
4. The Coastal Plains and Islands.

12.1.1 The Northern Mountains

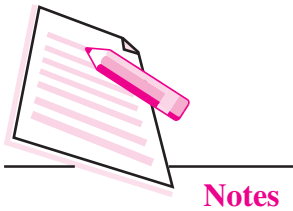
The Northern boundary of the country is formed by the mountain system of the Himalayas. It stretches from Jammu and Kashmir in the Northwest to the hill ranges of Purvanchal in the East. The literal meaning of the Himalaya (Him+Aalay) is the abode of snow. It is one of the youngest fold mountains of the world, rising to over 8000 meter above mean sea level. Being the highest mountain system of the world, it also has the highest peak of the world.

Himalayas can be divided into mainly three parallel ranges running from West to East direction:

- a. Greater Himalaya or the Himadri
- b. Lesser Himalaya or the Himachal
- c. Outer Himalaya or the Siwalik

Greater Himalaya or the Himadri: It is the northern most range with an average height of 6000 meter AMSL. Its width varies between 90 km to 120 km. The greatest peak of the world, the Mt. Everest, 8848 meter (Nepal) is in this range. The great peaks in Indian Territory are Kanchenjunga (8598 meter), Makalu (8481 meter), Dhaulagiri (8172 meter), Manaslu (8156 meter), Nanda Devi (7817 meter) etc. Many of the high mountain passes like Bara Lacha La, Shipkila, Thangla La, Nathula, Zojla etc. are located in this region of the Himalaya. This area is also very much in demand for adventure tourism activities like rockclimbing, trekking, and watching the natural beauty of the region.

Lesser Himalaya or the Himachal: This range runs almost parallel and to the south of the Himadri. Its altitude varies from 1800 to 3000 meter and its width is 60 to 80 km. The Dhauladhar, the Pirpanjal, Mahabharat Range and Mussoorie Range are included in this section. It is a complex mosaic of forest covered by ranges and fertile valleys. There are many hill stations like Shimla, Kullu, Manali, Dharamshala, Chail, Chakrata, Mussoorie, Nainital, Almora, Ranikhet, and Darjeeling besides many others in this region.

**Notes**



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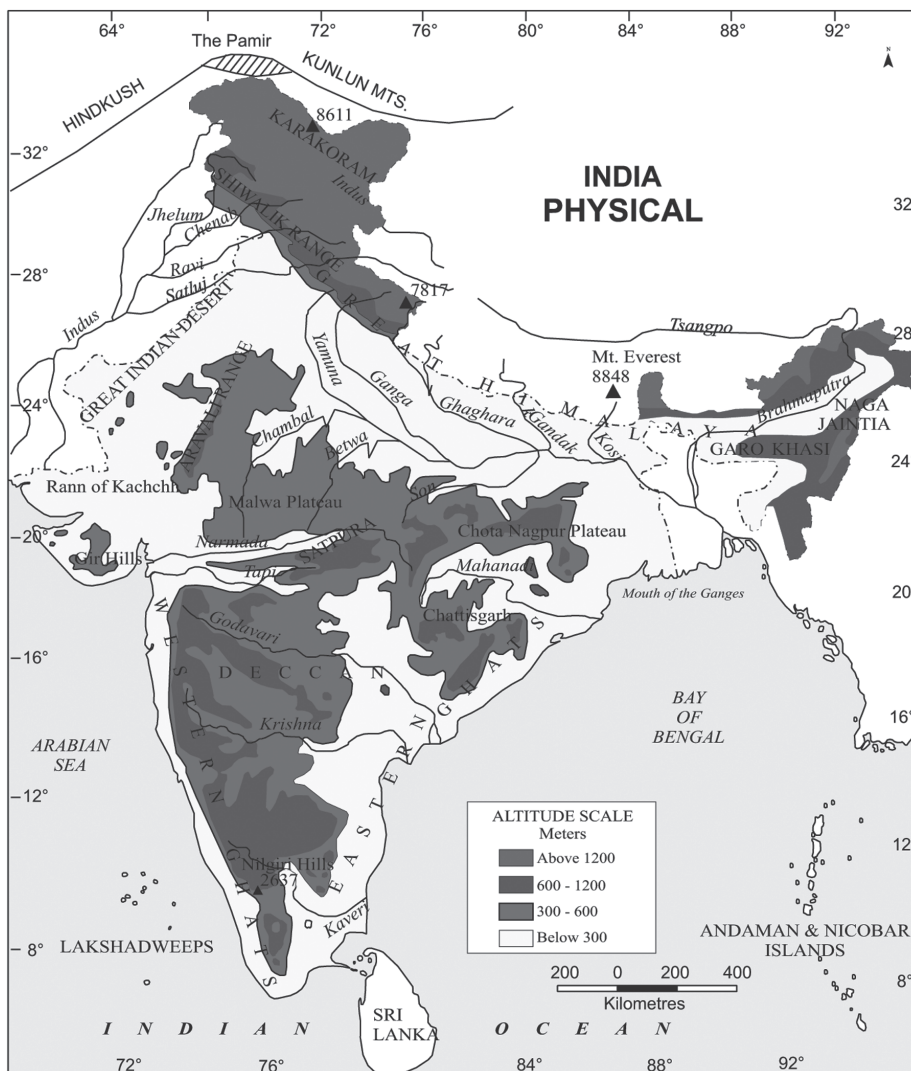


Figure 12.1: Physical Features of India

The British rulers in India developed some of these hill stations to escape the heat of the summer seasons. These hill stations are very much in demand even today, particularly in the summer season, to get respite from the scorching heat of the sun in the plains and plateau region of the country.

Outer Himalaya or the Siwalik: They are the southern most range of the mountains and are popularly known as the foothills of the Himalayas. Its altitude varies from 900 to 1500 meter and its width from 15 to 50 km. They are the newly formed ranges of the Himalayas. To the south of this range are the great plains of North India. The adjoining land between plains and the mountains is known as the Terai region. It has very dense vegetation which is deciduous in nature and is characterized by many long, flat-bottomed valleys known as Duns, for example Dehra Dun.

**Notes****12.1.2 The Northern Plains**

The Great Northern Plains are placed between the Himalayas in the north to Peninsular Plateau in the south. It extends from the western boundary of the country from Punjab and Rajasthan to the Ganges delta and the Brahmaputra plain in the East. It has three main river systems namely the Indus, the Ganges and the Brahmaputra. It is almost 2400 km in length from west to east. Its width varies from 200 km in Bihar to about 500 km in Punjab and Rajasthan. One of the most important characteristics of the Great Northern Plains has been the rise of many religions as well as being the center of civilization since time immemorial. Many of the religions, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism have evolved from this area. There are many cultural and religious centers in the plains, which have emerged as the centers of tourism for foreign as well as domestic tourists. Almost the entire region is famous for various kinds of attractions for tourists. These are religious places, heritage sites and historical monuments etc. about which you will read in different lessons in this course of Tourism. In fact they are the driving force for growing tourism in the plains of the country.

12.1.3 The Peninsular Plateau

The Peninsula Plateau is located to the south of the Great Northern Plains. It is surrounded by seas from three sides. It is one of the oldest land features of world. The Narmada river divides this peninsula into two parts. The Central Highland is north of the Narmada river and the Deccan Plateau lying to the South of this river.

The Central Highland: It is very important for the availability of minerals and fossil fuels like coal. Varieties of minerals like iron-ore, bauxite, copper, manganese, lead, zinc, coal, mica, nickel etc. are found in abundance. These minerals are the backbone for industrial development. Many of them are very essential for the development of infrastructures. The area offers great employment opportunity to the people as well as tourism.

The Deccan Plateau: It covers an area of about 7 lakh sq. km. Its Northern boundary is along the Satpura Range, Mahadev Hills and Rajmahal Hills. Together they form the base of the triangular shape of the Deccan Plateau. Its two sides run along the Western Ghats and Eastern Ghats and converge at the southern tip of the Peninsula. It stretches over Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Many of the east flowing rivers originate from the Western Ghats and drain downwards to the east because it slopes towards the eastern side. The Plateau can be divided into three distinct

zones, namely the Deccan Trap, also known as the area of black cotton soil, the Western Ghats and the Eastern Ghats.

Western Ghats is one of the world's top ten "Biodiversity Hotspots". The hot spot includes many national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, biosphere reserve and reserve forests. Many of them are designated as the heritage sites. The hill-stations and heritage sites are in good demand for tourists. There are many tunnels in the way. They provide beautiful picturesque scenic beauty with numerous waterfalls. They provide connectivity through road and railways. They play an important role in promoting tourism by reducing the time, distance and money of the tourists.

The Eastern Ghats are a discontinuous mountain range along the eastern coast of India. The Nimaigiri hills of Koraput and Mahendragiri hills of Ganjam districts of Odisha attain a height of about 1500 meter. These hills are thickly forested. Udagamandalam (Ooty), situated in Nilgiri Hills, is a very favoured hill station of South India. The southern parts of these broken ranges are lower in height. The southern part of this culminates in the form of a tip, joining both the Ghats – Western and Eastern.

12.1.4 The Coastal Plains and Islands

The Coastal Plains of India are found on both coasts – eastern and western. Western Coastal Plain is confined between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea. It starts from the Rann of Kutch in Gujarat in the North to Kanyakumari in the South. Several cascading waterfalls may be observed which attract tourists from various regions. This plain is simply divided into three.

The northern plain is known as Konkan Plain, the middle one as Kannad Plain and the southernmost as Malabar Plain. There are a number of long and narrow lagoons and backwaters e.g. Vembanad which is very famous in Kerala.

The Eastern Coastal Plains are located between the Eastern Ghats and the Bay of Bengal, starting from the southern part of the Gangatic Delta to Kanyakumari. Near Kanyakumari both plains – Eastern and Western meet and converge into one. This plain is about 120 km wide. These plains are very rich in soil fertility, producing abundance of rice. There are many rivers draining through this plain creating delta at their mouths. There are many lagoons formed along this coast and they are the center of attractions for the tourists. Chilka, Pulikat and Kolusu lakes are famous which attract tourists in great number.

There are two groups of Islands. All together there are 247 islands with India. They are scattered into two groups - Andaman and Nicobar Group and Lakshadweep Group. There are 222 islands in the Bay of Bengal and remaining



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25 islands are in the Arabian Sea. Both groups of islands are quite different in terms of their formation.

The islands in the Arabian Sea are mostly made up of coral deposits, hence, known as coral islands. The islands of the Bay of Bengal are basically made up due to tectonic activities, related to the formation of the Tertiary Mountain system. If one sees the extension of the Himalayas from Northeastern States further down towards the Bay of Bengal, it appears that it is the Himalayan orogeny. The islands are very special particularly from the point of view of tourism.



ACTIVITY 12.1

Take an outline map of India and show different physiographic regions of the country. Locate your position on the map. Write the characteristics of the area where you are living, in terms of physiography. Write an account of the tourism activities in your area. If the tourism activities are not found in your areas, prepare a list of reasons for it.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 12.1

1. Write any three characteristics of the Deccan Plateau.
2. Which of the Ghats is the Biodiversity Hotspots in India?
3. Differentiate the Andaman Nicobar Islands and the Lakshadweep Islands.

12.2 DISTRIBUTION OF TOURISTS PLACES IN INDIA

Almost the whole of India has many attractions for tourists both natural and cultural. Therefore, tourist centers are distributed throughout the country. These attractions are very closely associated with certain types of physiographic regions of the country. For examples, hill-stations are on the hills and mountains which offer cool climatic conditions. The mountainous region offers adventure tourism such as rock climbing, trekking angling, parachuting, rafting etc. Himalayan rivers provide the base for white water rafting in the Ganga, the Alaknanda, Chenab, the Beas etc. The beaches are found along the sea coasts. The combination of sea, sand and sun is very attractive for tourists such as Kovalam the world famous beach in Kerala. Many areas are full of forests. They have a number of National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries; protected forests which are charming for some tourists. Religious faith of the people is a great attraction

for many of the tourists. Hence, those places are also much sought after by the people. Some important places for tourists are shown in the Figure 12.2.



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Figure 12.2: Major Tourist Destinations in India

12.2.1 Major Tourist Circuits

There are several tourist centers in India, but some of them are more in demand in comparison to others. Hence, certain special arrangements are provided to facilitate the tourists to visit these circuits without much difficulty.

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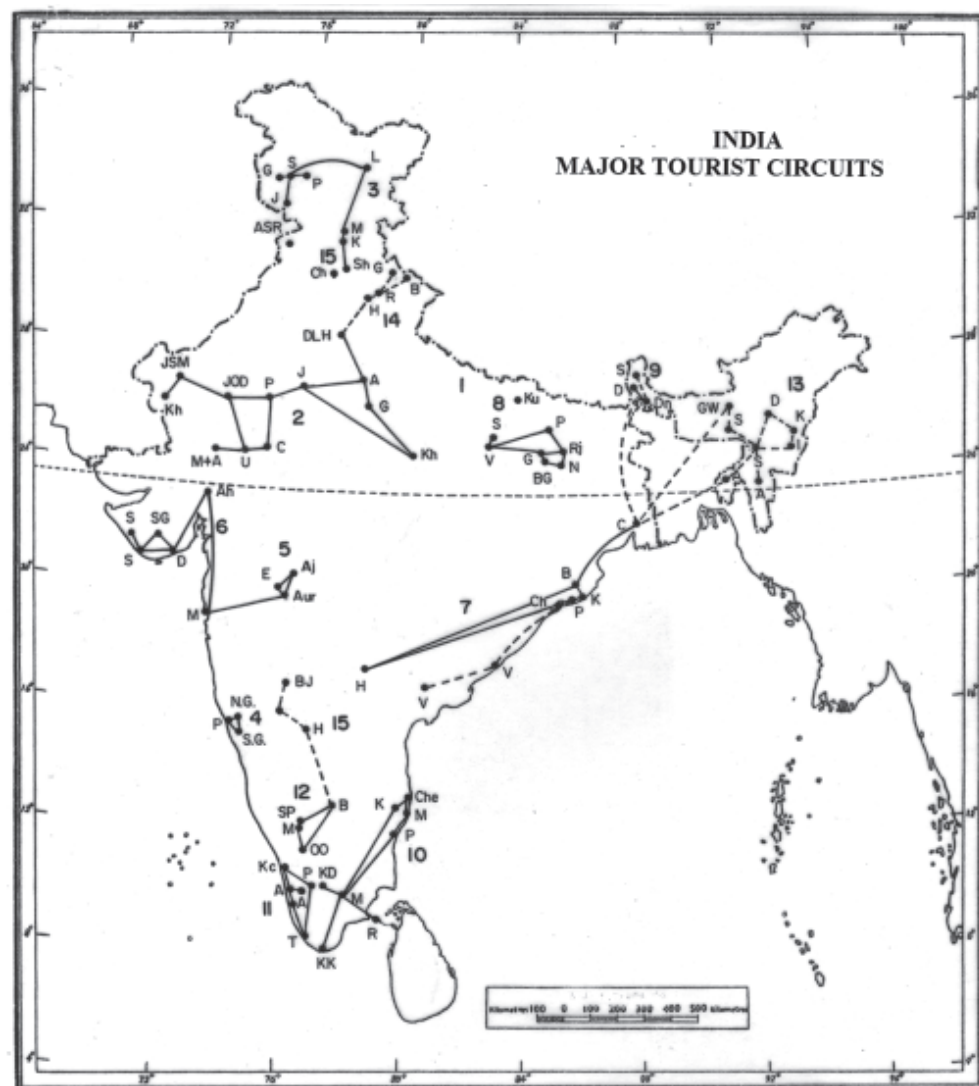
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It is also kept in mind that it should be easy and quick to move with comfort and economy. For this purpose, many tourist circuit routes have been developed by the tour operators depending upon the demand from the tourists. Some of the important among them are:

1. Delhi – Agra – Fatehpur Sikri – Jaipur – Delhi.
2. Gwalior – Khajuraho – Bhopal – Gwalior.
3. Sarnath – Kusinagar – Bodh Gaya – Sarnath.
4. Bhubaneswar – Konark – Puri – Chilka – Bhubaneswar.

And many more are in operation. We can get the details regarding the location and routes of transit circuits from Fig. 12.3.



Based upon Survey of India Outline Map printed in 1996.
The territorial waters of India extend into the sea to a distance of twelve nautical miles measured from the appropriate base line.
Responsibility for correctness of internal details shown on the map rests with the publisher.
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Figure 12.3: Major Tourist Circuits in India.

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to stay at the hill-stations for some days when the sun is very hot in the plains and the plateau.

12.3.3 Adventure Tourism

Adventure tourism is one in which tourists are involved in some exploration of less known areas or places particularly in a hostile environment. It can involve some degree of risk or physical damage to them. There are three types of adventure tourism (i) Aerial adventure (ii) Water adventure and (iii) Land adventure.

Aerial adventure includes mainly parachuting and paragliding, water based adventure tourism are rafting and water skiing. In India, land adventure is very popular and includes rock climbing, angling, mountaineering, trekking, mountain biking, skiing etc. This type of tourism is more concentrated in the rugged mountainous terrain. In India, these are more popular in the Himalayan and plateau region.

Table 12.1 Details of Major Treks in India

Name of the Treks	Height (meter)	Days	Difficulty Level	Suitable Period for Trekking
Mesmerising Markha Valley	5150	12-15	Moderate	June to October
Frozen River Trek of Ladakh	3850	17-21	Extremely Strenuous	January to March
Striking Stok Kangri	6153	11-13	Easy	June to October
Glorious Goecha La	4940	12-15	Moderate	March to May
Holy Kinner Kailash Circuit	6500	12-16	Moderate to Strenuous	July to October
Pin Parvati Valley (of Gods)	5319	13-17	Moderate to Strenuous	June to October
Hemkund and Valley of Flowers	3853	9-13	Easy	May to October
Gangotri-Gaumukh-Tapoban	4463	9-13	Moderate	May to October
Boundless Nanda Devi	4268	10-13	Moderate	June to October
Dodital – Mythological Lake	4150	6-8	Moderate	May to October
Majestic Khatling Glacier	4200	12-14	Moderate	May to October
Inexplicable Lake of Roopkund	5029	7-9	Moderate	May to October
Garhwal Mountains-Kuari Pass	4575	9-12	Moderate	April to mid-June and August to September
Perfect Panchachuli Base Camp	4260	7-10	Moderate	May to October
Engrossing Milan Glacier-Kumaon	4150	13-15	Moderate to Strenuous	June to October
Soft Adventure of Pindari Glacier	3990	11-13	Easy	May to October
Kafni Glacier-the Hidden Gem	3892	9-11	Easy	May to October
Padam-Darcha - Adobe of Snow	4950	9-12	Easy	June to October
Hiking the Hemis-Nimaling	5270	8-10	Moderate	June to October



Notes

The Table 12.1 shows places for trekking in the Himalayan region. Apart from them, there are many more other trekking routes in the Himalayas as well as in the plateau areas.

Adventure tourism has been gaining popularity in the recent times. Many such programmes have already been prepared while television channels like National Geographic, National Geographic Wild, Animal Planet, Discovery, Discovery Science etc. are making them popular.

**Notes**

12.3.4 Wildlife Sanctuaries and National Parks Tourism

A wildlife sanctuary is an area specially planned where any human interference is banned. No one can hunt or shoot any of the animals in the area. Hence, it is a protected area and effort is made to keep the surrounding in its original state. National parks are areas where native plants and animals and their habitats, places of natural beauty, historic heritage and aboriginal cultural heritage are protected. Hence, both wildlife sanctuaries and national parks have great importance in maintaining the awareness about the natural habitat.

The tourism activities are taken up in the wildlife sanctuaries and national parks. It gives an idea of their importance in our life. Though organisation of tours within the pristine environment causes some ill-effect on the surrounding, still they create awareness about their importance.

The wildlife sanctuaries and national parks are mostly associated with the rugged terrain where there are more forested areas. They make 4.5 percent of total geographical area. The area is also less in demand because of the undulating character of the surface where agricultural activities are not well developed. There are 442 wildlife sanctuaries. Among them, there are 41 Tiger Reserve Forests. Some of the Wildlife Sanctuaries are developed for some special purposes like Bird Sanctuary. National Parks are of greater importance at the national level. Today there are 102 National Parks encompassing 39,919 sq. km. of area and many more are under the process of national recognition. Manas, Kanha, Ranthambore, Dudhwa, Bandhavgarh, Jim Corbett, Rajaji, Kaziranga are all very favoured choice of tourist.

12.3.5 Beach Tourism

Beach is a land form found along the sea coast of an ocean or sea. It is usually made up of sand, particles, gravels, shingles and pebbles generated from the rock fragments by wave erosion and deposition. Hence, beaches are typically developed in the areas along the coast where wave action deposits the eroded materials. India has a sea coast of about 7000 km. This great length of sea coast provides beautiful beaches and a restful and quiet environment with abundant nearby greenery, perfect to relax and refresh. It rejuvenates the body and mind

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of the visitors. Walking on the water soaked sandy beach along the blue clean water of the ocean generates romanticism. The unending site of the ocean water has a unique feeling of getting away from the earthly worries. The sunrise and sunset are really beautiful to watch from the beach. The sea, sand and the sun annihilate all worries. The locational advantage of beach attracts many tourists, both national and international.

The important beaches of India can be seen in the figure 12.5.



Figure 12.5: Major Beaches in India.



ACTIVITY 12.2

Take two outline maps of India. On one map, show the hill-stations of India. Based on this map, try to find the answer of the following questions:

- What is the pattern you find on the map?

- b. Where are the most hill-stations located?
- c. What are the reasons for concentration of hill-stations in the Himalayan region?

On the other map, show the sea beaches of the country. What are the main reasons for the growing popularity of tourism on beaches?



INTEXT QUESTIONS 12.2

1. Describe the major tourist circuits of India.
2. Name the major hill stations in northern India.
3. Explain three types of adventure tourism.

12.4 MOST POPULAR WILDLIFE SANCTUARIES IN INDIA

- **Ranthambore Wildlife Sanctuary** in Rajasthan is spread over 392 sq.kms and located just 130 kms away from Jaipur. The deciduous forests of Ranthambore provide great opportunity to observe wildlife viewing of the tiger. Tourists can spot other animals like sambar, chital and panthers. Early morning and late afternoon safaris take tourists to possible spots where tiger and some of its cubs may cross their path.
- One of India's prime destinations for spotting the wild at their natural habitat is the **Corbett National Park** located at the foothills of Himalayas in Uttarakhand. Rare flora and fauna make it the wildlife hub of India. Corbett Park gives endless possibilities of interacting with the wild animals, so tourists come and connect with these magnificent creatures and discover a unique bond they share with nature.
- Sheltered in the Vindhya Ranges of Madhya Pradesh, the **Bandhavgarh National Park** was the original home of the precious white tigers where they were first sighted in Rewa. The lush greens of this wild paradise are spread across 437 sq. kms of land. There is a lot for the wildlife enthusiasts who can look forward to. Nilgai, Chinkara and wild boars are amongst those easily sighted. Spotting a fox could be tricky. Since the park boasts of a healthy population of tigers there are extremely favourable chances of seeing them.
- Perched high on the Western Ghats in God's own country Kerala has the picturesque **Periyar National Park** and tiger reserve. The park is widely known for the large herds of Indian elephants which thrive on the Periyar River nestled in the dense forests of the Cardamom Hills.



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- **Kaziranga National Park** in Assam is a haven for the wild. It is the habitat of the one horned rhinoceros, a paradise for wild elephants and water buffalos, a prominent tiger reserve and a world heritage site. Hog deer, sloth bears, capped langurs and some of the largest pythons in the world can be found here. One can probably see the Gigantic Dolphins when the rivers are in spate.
- Enshrined in the swamped mangroves at the tip of Bengal is the kingdom of Royal Bengal Tigers known as **Sunderbans National Park**. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Sunderbans are spread over a massive area of 4264 sq kms, disappearing towards the south into the sea. The swamps help tourists to locate the striped beasts seen resting in the estuarine mangroves, escaping the scorching heat. Tourists can also see snakes, crocodiles, fishing cats and other marine species.
- One of India's best tiger reserves, the **Kanha National Park** is in the valleys of Banjar and Halon in Madhya Pradesh. Wildlife lovers from all corners of the world flock to Kanha to catch a glimpse of its tigers, spotted deer and wolves.
- The **Mudumalai National Park** is a passage to its neighbouring wildlife reserves situated at the crossroads of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka in the north west of the Nilgiri. It has a large variety of fauna and an interesting mix of flora with tropical green forests in one corner and dry deciduous in the other. Tourists can enjoy exciting safari at Mudumalai. Animals found here are sambhar, chitales, wild boars, primates and elephants along with the exclusive tigers.
- The last preserve of the Asiatic Lion, **Gir Wildlife Sanctuary** is on the brink of peninsular Gujarat in the south western belt of dry deciduous forests. One of India's prime wildlife attractions, Gir is a famous hub for the big cats, which includes lions as well as leopards. In fact, Gir has the largest number of leopards in the country. The sanctuary's water are known to be infested with numerous crocodiles.
- **Keoladeo** is in Rajasthan and has many varieties of birds. Formerly a duck hunting reserve of the Maharajas, it has now become one of the largest areas for migratory birds. Tourists enjoy the famous Siberian Crane, Warblers, and Babbler, Red Kite, Vulture and Sociable Lapwing among others. Lush green lands and lovely lakes, makes it a treat for tourists to see and enjoy.

12.4.1 Famous Bird Sanctuaries of India : Home to over 1200 species of birds

India is a home for many species of local as well as migrant birds. Bird sanctuaries in India are popular among bird watchers. Some of the local beautiful birds are Peacock, Great Indian Bustard, Indian Horn-bill, Kingfishers and Indian Eagle “Garuda”, a Sacred Bird of Hindus. The Great Indian Horn-bill is the largest amongst all the horn-bills found in the forests of India. Kulik (Raiganj) Bird Sanctuary is one of the largest bird sanctuaries in Asia. Nawabganj is an ideal tourist destination for twitching and bird watching in India. Twitching is referred to those who travel long distances to see rare birds.

- **Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary** in Rajasthan is one of the most famous bird sanctuaries in India. It is also known as Keoladeo Ghana National Park. Thousands of rare and highly endangered birds come here during the winter season. During winter season it is the most wanted site by the bird watchers who flock over here to see some of the most exotic birds in the world.
- **Sultanpur Bird Sanctuary** is home for several colourful winged migratory bird species who visited India from north of the Himalayas.
- The **Salim Ali bird Sanctuary** is home to many varieties of local and migratory birds, situated in Chorao Island along the river Mondovi in Goa. Sparrows, beautiful peafowl, parrots, pelican, Indian giant squirrel and other rare species of fauna can be spotted here.
- **Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary** also known as Vembanad bird sanctuary is situated in Kerala. It offers a home to a large number of migratory birds like flycatcher, teal, Siberian stork, crane, parrots and wood beetle. Riding on a houseboat is the best way for bird watching in Kerala. Other bird sanctuaries in Kerala are Mangalavanam and Thattekkad bird sanctuaries, situated on the banks of the Periyar River and famous for some of the rarest species of birds and other unique fauna.
- **Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary** is situated on the banks of the Kaveri river in Karnataka. The exotic migratory birds like light Ibis, egret, partridge, heron, river tern, snake bird, and stone plougher are a major tourist attraction. It is located about 20 kilometres from the famous Brindavan garden which lies adjoining the Krishnarajasagara dam.
- The **Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary** in Tamil Nadu is the oldest bird sanctuary in India. The Vedanthangal lake region attracts a variety of birds such as pintail, garganey, grey wagtail, blue-winged teal, common sandpiper. One sixth of landmass of Tamil Nadu is covered with forests, which is paradise for animal lovers and bird watchers. Kunthakulam bird sanctuary



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and Pulicat lake bird sanctuary are also famous for bird watching situated on the border of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

- **Kaundinya Bird Sanctuary** is one of the best bird sanctuaries in India, situated near Chittoor in Andhra Pradesh. The habitat has rugged high hills and deep valleys and Kaigal and Kaundinya are two beautiful streams, which flow through the sanctuary. Kaundinya sanctuary offers the best of wildlife and bird watching in India. Kolleru lake bird sanctuary also brings a variety of migratory birds to its largest fresh water Kolleru Lake.
- **Chilka Lake Bird sanctuary** located near Puri in Odisha is very popular among tourists. It is the most beautiful brackish water lake in Asia and famous for a rich variety of birds. Chilka Lake serves as a bird sanctuary and is the largest winter ground for migratory birds in India. It is also one of the best bird watching spots in India.
- In Maharashtra **Mayani Bird sanctuary**, attracts many migratory birds, such as flamingos from Siberia which come in large numbers. It is one of the most prominent and famous bird sanctuaries in India.
- **Nal Sarovar Bird Sanctuary** comprising a huge lake and ambient marshes, is situated in Ahmadabad, Gujarat. Nal Sarovar bird sanctuary is the largest wetland bird sanctuary in India, where one can spot flamingos, pelicans, spoonbills, avocets, coots, pintails, small cormorants, small grebes and shovellers. It is one of the busiest tourist spots in India.

12.5 HILL STATIONS: NATURAL TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

Popular Hill Stations in India

- **Shimla** used to be the summer capital of the British when they ruled India. Now it's the state capital of Himachal Pradesh. It is a cool, charming town enveloped by Oak, Pine and Rhododendron forests. It is famous for its colonial style buildings and historic railway. The old Christ Church, with its beautiful stained glass windows, mesmerizing views from Scandal Point, and the Viceregal Lodge are the landmarks of this town. It is also interesting to watch the sunrise and sunset from the Observatory Hill.
- **Manali**, with its soothing backdrop of the Himalayas, offers a blend of tranquility and adventure that makes it one of northern India's most popular destinations. Located in the Kullu Valley of Himachal Pradesh, it's a magical place bordered by cool pine forests and the raging Beas river.
- **Darjeeling**, in West Bengal, is also famous for its lush tea gardens and for a stunning view of Mount Kanchenjunga, the world's third highest peak. The town is dotted with monasteries, botanical gardens and a zoo. Darjeeling

is a wonderful place to walk around, and explore the tea estates, villages, and markets.

- The hill station of **Nainital**, in the Kumaon region of Uttarakhand, is a popular summer retreat. It has the emerald coloured Naini Lake and many forests. Long walks in the forests and boating in the Naini Lake are major tourist attractions.
- **Mussoorie**, near Dehradun in Uttarakhand, is a popular weekend destination for North Indians. It has a lot of facilities developed especially for tourists. Cable car to Gun Hill, beautiful nature walk along Camel's Back Road, Kempt Falls, or horse ride to Lal Tibba which is the highest peak in Mussoorie are beautiful places. The mighty Himalayas can also be seen from here.
- **Srinagar**, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, has lovely lakes and beautiful houseboats and Shikaras. The gardens have a distinctly Mughal influence, as they were created by the Mughal emperors. Srinagar also has the largest Tulip garden in Asia while adventure lovers come here for snow skiing in winter.
- **Munnar**, in Kerala, is renowned for its sprawling tea plantations. The Kundale Tea Plantations, which surrounds a picturesque lake, offers the best opportunity to see the tea being picked and processed. The area is blessed with the natural beauty of winding lanes, misty hills, and forests full of exotic plants and wildlife. It is interesting to see enthusiasts trek to Anamudi, the highest peak in South India, explore Eravikulam National Park, or go rock climbing and paragliding. No wonder, tourists like to visit Munnar whenever an opportunity comes their way.
- **Ooty** in Tamil Nadu is a soothing place to escape the summer heat for which you can take the scenic toy train from Metupalaiyam. Ooty's most popular attractions include the 22 hectare Government Botanical Gardens where a flower show is held there every May as part of the Summer Festival, boating on Ooty Lake, and climbing Dodabetta Peak for an excellent view of the Nilgiri hills.
- **Kodaikanal** is nestled 120 kilometers from Madurai in the Palani Hills of Tamil Nadu. It has a large variety of flora and fauna. Over here, you can see orchards of pear trees, charming buildings with gabled roofs. Herbs and aromatherapy oils are some of the most interesting things to buy in Kodaikanal, with the eucalyptus oils being particularly popular.
- **Mount Abu**, situated at an altitude of 1220 m above the sea level is the highest point on the Aravalli Ranges. Mount Abu literally means the 'Hill



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of Wisdom’ and is a green oasis located in the lush green-forested hills. It is in direct contrast to the barren desert of Rajasthan and is the only hill station in Rajasthan.

In Mount Abu you will see the Dilwara Jain Temples which are the best examples of Jain architecture in India. The interiors of the temple are extravagantly carved on white marble. The Vimal Vasahi Temple and Tejpal Temple are the most remarkable among all. This hill station is also very famous for its Nakki Lake. An ancient temple dedicated to goddess Durga, Adhar Devi Temple, is located 3 kms to the north of Mount Abu. It is built in a natural crack in a rock.



Figure 12.6: Mount Abu Hill Station

The neighbouring areas of Mount Abu also have interesting tourist places like the Guru Shikhar (15 km), Achaleshwar Mahadev Temple (11 km), Mount Abu Wildlife Sanctuary (8 km), Brahma Kumaris Spiritual University and Museum. Mount Abu Wildlife Sanctuary is home to species of birds, panthers, sambhars and wild boars.

- **Khandala** is a hill station in the Western Ghats in the state of Maharashtra. It is on the road link between the Deccan Plateau and the Konkan plain. Lonavala is set amongst the slopes of the Sahyadri mountain range and has become famous because of nature’s gift of beautiful valleys, hills, milky waterfalls, lush greenery, and pleasant cool winds. Major attractions are Kune Falls, Tiger’s Leap, Duke’s Nose, Shivaji Park, Rajmachi Park, Ryewood, Lohagad Darshan and Amruntanjan point.

Table 12.2 Some other Popular Hill Stations in India

State	Where	Hill Station
Andhra Pradesh	Araku Valley	Horsley Hills
Gujarat	Saputara	Wilson Hills
Himachal Pradesh	Chail	Dharamsala, Dalhousie, Kasauli, Manali, Shimla, Kufri, Palampur
Jammu & Kashmir		Srinagar, Pahalgam, Gulmarg, Leh
Karnataka		Kudremukh, Kemmangundi, Madikeri, Nandi Hills, Chikkamagaluru
Kerala		Munnar, Devikulam, Nelliampathi, Ponmudi, Vythiri, Vagamon
Madhya Pradesh		Pachmarhi
Maharashtra		Lonavla, Amboli, Chikhaldara, Khandala, Lavasa, Mahabaleshwar, Matheran, Panchgani, Toranmal
Meghalaya		Nohkalikai
Odisha		Daringbadi
Rajasthan		Mount Abu
Sikkim		Gangtok, Pelling, Lachung
Tamil Nadu		Ooty, Coonoor, Kodaikanal
Uttarakhand		Nainital, Mussoorie, Almora, Auli, Kausani, Ranikhet
West Bengal		Kalimpong, Kurseong



Notes



Figure 12.7: A Hill Station

MODULE – 4

Natural Diversity as
Tourist Attraction

Natural Tourist Attractions in India



Notes

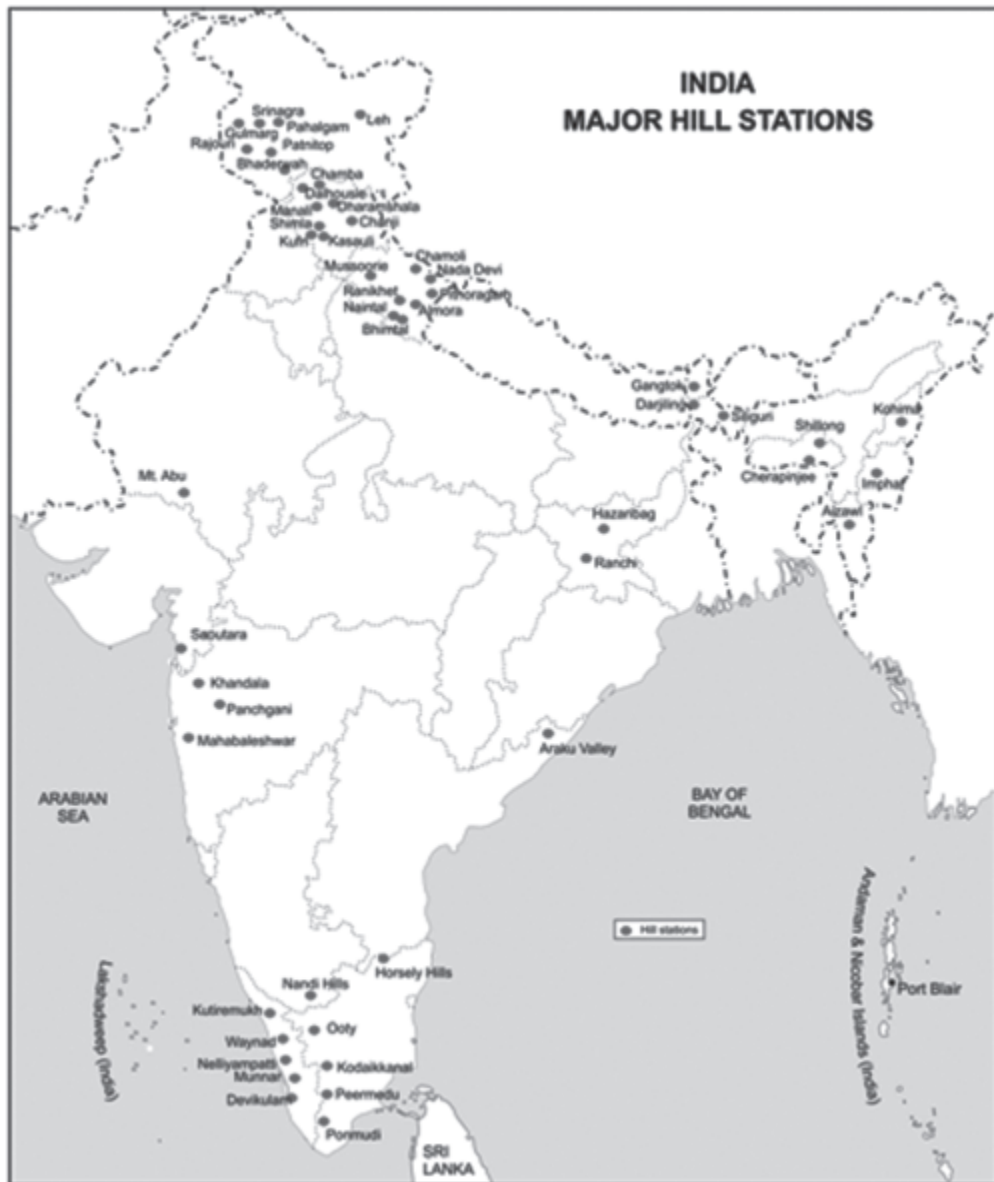


Figure 12.8: Hill Stations in India



INTEXT QUESTIONS 12.3

1. Define Wildlife Sanctuary and Bird Sanctuary.
2. Why do tourists visit Wildlife and Bird Sanctuaries?
3. Why is Nal Sarovar Bird Sanctuary famous?



WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- India is divided into four major physiographic divisions. They are (a) Northern Mountains, (b) Great Northern Plains, (c) Peninsular Plateau and (d) Coastal Plains and Islands. All of them are very important for tourism perspectives.
- They provide great diversity in the country. The diversity may be seen as major attractions for tourism.
- The diversity is in terms of physiography, climate, culture and tradition, historical and cultural heritage. In fact, the greater diversity of the country provides immense opportunities for tourists to visit different places.
- Some areas are very suitable for scenic beauty and good for adventure tourism.
- Nature tourism is also very popular. One example may be the Himalayas. The desert of Rajasthan is also very rich in culture and tradition.
- The coastal area is very rich in beach tourism. Tourists from the country and outside the country prefer to visit. In the same way the islands are also very popular.
- The hills and the slope of the Himalayas are also great in demand as hill-stations. Therefore, the greater diversity of the country provides greater opportunity for tourism. Hence, the proper accelerating policy of the government is encouraging tourism greatly in the country.



Notes



TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Describe the different geographic regions of India.
2. How physiography of India promotes the tourism activities?
3. Write an account on tourist centers in India.



ANSWER TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

12.1

- 1 Deccan plateau is divided into three parts, Deccan Trap, Western Ghats and Eastern Ghats.

MODULE – 4

Natural Diversity as Tourist Attraction



Notes

Natural Tourist Attractions in India

It covers an area of 7 lakhs 59 km. Its average height ranges from 500 meter to 1000 meter.

2. The Western Ghats
3. Andaman Nicobar is rocky whereas Lakshadweep is made up of coral. Andaman has large sized islands with big numbers whereas Lakshadweep islands are smaller in size and less numbers.

12.2

1. There are many tourist circuits in India. The tourists used to visit the places in the routes. Those places are very important in terms of tourism. They are made/ organized by tour operators. Because of their greater demand?
2. There are many hill stations in north India. Important among them are: – Shimla, Kullu, Manali, Mussoorie, Nainital, Darjeeling, Mt. Abu, Dharamshala.
3. Three types – Aerial, Water and Land
 - (a) Aerial Adventure tourism – Parachuting and Paragliding
 - (b) Water Adventure tourism – Rafting and water skiing
 - (c) Land Adventure tourism – Rock climbing and angling

12.3

1. Wildlife Sanctuary is a planned area for preservation of wildlife from human interference. Bird Sanctuary is a special type of wildlife sanctuary for conservation of variety of bird species in their natural habitat.
2. Tourists are keen to visit the natural behaviour of the animals and birds.
3. Nal Sarovar Bird Sanctuary is famous because it is the largest wetland bird sanctuary and busiest tourist spot in India.