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GEOGRAPHY OF PUNJAB

CHAPTER 2

Physical Features and Rivers of Punjab

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CHAPTER 2

Physical Features and Rivers of Punjab

Landforms of Punjab and its River System

IN THIS CHAPTER

- Shiwalik Hills and the Kandi belt
- Alluvial plains – Majha, Doaba, Malwa
- Sand dunes (tibbas) of south-west Punjab
- Land of Seven Rivers to Land of Five Rivers
- Sutlej, Beas, Ravi and Ghaggar
- Confluences – Harike, Trimab, Panjnad

PART A Physical Features and Landforms

Average altitude of Punjab: **180–300 m** above sea level. From north-east to south-west the land slopes down from the hills to the sandy plains:

Shiwalik Hills (400–700 m) → **Kandi (300–400 m)** → **Alluvial Plains (180–300 m)** → **Sand Dunes (<180 m)**

Landform	Height (m)	Description
Shiwalik Hills	400–700	Forested; separate the Himalayas from the plains; width **5–12 km**. Districts: Gurdaspur, Pathankot, Hoshiarpur, Nawanshahr, Rupnagar
The Kandi	300–400	Plain (foothill) area at the base of the hills; width **10–15 km**. Area: east of Pathankot, Hoshiarpur, Ropar, Gurdaspur, Nawanshahr
Alluvial Plains	180–300	Agricultural heartland, about **70%** of the state's area. Three parts: 1. **Majha** (Upper Bari Doab) – between Ravi and Beas 2. **Doaba** (Bist–Jalandhar Doab) – between Beas and Sutlej 3. **Malwa plains** – between Sutlej and Ghaggar
Sand Dunes	<180	Semi-arid, desert-like area; locally called **"tibbas"**. Districts: Fazilka, Ferozepur, Muktsar, Patiala, Sangrur, Bathinda, Mansa

PART B Rivers of Punjab

Historical Context

Rigvedic period	**Land of Seven Rivers** (Sapta Sindhu) – Indus, Sutlej, Beas, Ravi, Chenab, Jhelum, Saraswati
Mahabharata period	**Land of Five Rivers** – Sutlej, Beas, Ravi, Chenab, Jhelum
Etymology	Persian: **Punj** (five) + **Aab** (water)
Greek name	**Pentapotamia**

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Major Rivers

River	Origin	Dams / projects	Enters Punjab at	Vedic name	Sanskrit name
Sutlej (Tibetan: Langchen Khambab) Longest river in Punjab	Rakas Tal, near Mansarovar (Tibet)	Bhakra Nangal Dam	Ropar	Shutudri	Shatadru
Beas	Beas Kund, Kullu hills near Rohtang Pass	Pong Dam, Kandi Canal, Mukerian Hydel Channel	Hoshiarpur	Arjikiya	Vipasha
Ravi Shortest river in Punjab	Bara Bhangal, Dhauladhar range (Himachal Pradesh)	Ranjit Sagar Dam, Upper Bari Doab Canal	Pathankot	Parushni	Iravati
Ghaggar Seasonal – flows only in the rainy season	Shiwalik hills, Solan district (HP)	–	Patiala	Identified with Saraswati	–

IMPORTANT RIVER FACTS

- Longest river in Punjab: **Sutlej** · Shortest: **Ravi**
- **Harike** (Tarn Taran): the Beas joins the Sutlej
- Perennial rivers (flow all year): **Sutlej, Beas, Ravi** · Seasonal river: **Ghaggar**
- **Trimab**: meeting point of Ravi, Chenab and Jhelum · **Panjnad**: where the Trimab meets the Sutlej (in Pakistan)

MEMORY TRICK

Sanskrit names in river order Sutlej–Beas–Ravi: **"S-V-I"** → **S**hatadru, **V**ipasha, **I**ravati.

QUICK REVISION

- Shiwalik 400–700 m · Kandi 300–400 m · Plains 180–300 m (70% area) · Tibbas <180 m
- Sutlej – Rakas Tal, Bhakra, enters at Ropar · Beas – Pong, Hoshiarpur · Ravi – Ranjit Sagar, Pathankot
- Harike = Beas + Sutlej · Ghaggar = seasonal (Saraswati)