Ojaank Times

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OJAANK TIMES DAILY Mains Question

Practice Questions for Mains Exam:

Question 1. **What are Karewas? How are they formed? Discuss their geographical distribution in India and economic significance.**

Answer Format

Answer:-

The word Karewa in Kashmiri dialect means, “elevated table-land.” These plateaus are 13,000- 18,000 metre-thick deposits of alluvial soil and sediments like sandstone and mudstone. Karewas are lacustrine deposits (deposits in lake) in the Valley of Kashmir and in Bhadarwah Valley of the Jammu Division. These are the flat topped mounds that border the Kashmir Valley on all sides. They are characterized with fossils of mammals and at places by peat.

Formation

- These sediments occur as terraces, plateaus and mounds and rest over the Paleozoic Mesozoic sediments of the Kashmir 'basin'.
- Karewas were formed during the Pleistocene Period (1 million years ago), when the entire Valley of Kashmir was under water.
- Due to the rise of Pirpanjal, the drainage was impounded and a lake of about 5000 sq. km area was developed and thus a basin was formed. Subsequently, the lake was drained through Baramulla gorge. The deposits left in the process are known as karewas.

- The thickness of karewas is about 1400 m.
- The karewas have been elevated, dissected and removed by subaerial denudation to be in the present position.

Geographical distribution in India

- The Karewa deposits in the Kashmir valley have been conventionally divided into two stages, lower and upper, representing argillaceous and arenaceous facies respectively.
- The upper Karewasare less fossiliferous than the lower Karewas.
- The entire belt touching the foothills of the Pirpanjal represents the lower Karewas, which has been exposed to the rivers starting from the south such as Veshav,

Rembiara, Romushu, Dodhganga, Shaliganga, Boknag nar and Ningli.

- Lower Karewa sections at Aharbal, Anantnag, Arigam, Baramulla have been exposed by these rivers.
- The rest of the Karewa sediments occupy the middle of the entire flank of the valley, including Pampore, Srinagar, Burzuhom, Dilpur, Pattan, Parihaspora, and parts of Baramulla District.
- These represent upper Karewas of the valley.
- The late Cenozoic deposits exposed in the Kashmir valley assume special significance as they are extensively fluvioglacial, fluvial, lacustrine and eolian in origin.

Economic Significance

- The Karewa deposits are composed of sand, silt, clay, shale, mud, lignite, gravel and loessic sediments.
- Therefore, it is extremely important for agricultural and horticultural practices in the valley.
- The karewas are mainly devoted to the cultivation of saffron, almond, walnut, apple orchards and several other cash crops.
- Kashmir saffron, which received a Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2020 for its longer and thicker stigmas, deep-red colour, high aroma and bitter flavour, is grown on these karewas.

Despite its agricultural and archaeological importance, karewas are now being excavated to be used in construction. Between 1995 and 2005, massive portions of karewas in Pulwama, Budgam and Baramulla districts were razed to the ground for clay for the 125-km-long Qazigund-Baramulla rail line and the Srinagar airport is built on the Damodar karewa in Budgam. The rampant destruction has reduced these plateau lands into ugly ravines. Thus we need to preserve this geological treasure and legacy for the generations to come.