
Chapter 8

India: Climate, Vegetation and Wildlife

❖ Climate

- Climate of a place is affected by factors like location, altitude, relief and distance from the sea.
- The climate of India is of monsoon type.
- The four major seasons in India are winter, summer, rainy and autumn.
- Cold Weather Season or Winter
 - Cool dry winds blow from north to south at this time and the sunrays do not fall directly on the earth's surface in northern India.
- Hot Weather Season or Summer
 - Hot and dry winds known as loo blow during the day in the summer season.
- South West Monsoon Season or Rainy Season
 - The winds from Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal blow to the land carrying moisture and cause rainfall after striking the mountain barriers.
- Season of Retreating Monsoons or Autumn
 - Winds blow from land to the Bay of Bengal and thus, southern parts of India especially Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh receive rainfall.
- The monsoon is important for India as agriculture depends upon it for most of the rainfall.

❖ Natural Vegetation

- The grass, shrubs and trees which grow naturally are called natural vegetation.
- Differences in climatic conditions lead to different forms of vegetation.
- Tropical Rain Forest
 - Tropical rain forests are found in areas which receive high rainfall such as Andaman and Nicobar Islands, parts of North-Eastern states and a narrow strip of the Western slope of the Western Ghats.
 - The forests are evergreen because the trees shed their leaves at different times in the year.
 - Important trees found in these forests are mahogany, ebony and rosewood.
- Tropical Deciduous Forests
 - They are found in Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and in parts of Maharashtra.
 - The important trees are sal, teak, peepal, neem and shisham that shed their leaves at a particular time in the year.

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- Thorny Bushes
 - They are found in Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Eastern slopes of Western Ghats and Gujarat.
 - The leaves are in the form of spines to save water. For example, cactus, khair, babool and keekar.
 - Mountain Vegetation
 - This vegetation is found in mountainous areas at a height between 1500 metres and 2500 metres.
 - Most of the trees are conical in shape. For example, Chir, Pine and Deodar.
 - Mangrove Forests
 - This type of vegetation is found in the regions of saline water.
 - These forests are found in Sunderbans in West Bengal and in the Andaman and Nicobar islands. The Sunderbans are named after the Sundri species of trees.
 - ❖ Importance of Forests
 - Forests produce oxygen which is essential for breathing and prevents global warming by absorbing carbon dioxide.
 - They provide fuel, fodder, medicinal herbs, honey, gum, timber etc.
 - They prevent soil erosion and are natural habitat of wildlife.
 - ❖ Wild Life
 - A variety of animals are found in India. Tiger is the national animal.
 - Asiatic lions are found in Gir forests of Gujarat. Elephants are found in Assam, Karnataka and Kerala. Snow leopards are found in Himalayan region. Rhinoceroses are found in Assam.
 - The peacock is India's national bird and parrots, mynah, pigeons, geese, bulbul and ducks are several other birds.
 - Migratory birds migrate from one place to another in definite season.
 - Siberian Crane from Siberia, Stork, Flamingo, Curlew, Pelican and Pintail Duck are a few examples of migratory birds that migrate from their places to India in winter.
 - Many species of birds and animal face extinction due to cutting of trees and hunting. Wildlife sanctuaries, national parks and biosphere reserves have been set up to protect them.