UNIT X
ECOLOGY

Diversity is not only a characteristic of living organisms but also of content in biology textbooks. Biology is presented either as botany, zoology and microbiology or as classical and modern. The later is a euphemism for molecular aspects of biology. Luckily we have many threads which weave the different areas of biological information into a unifying principle. Ecology is one such thread which gives us a holistic perspective to biology. The essence of biological understanding is to know how organisms, while remaining an individual, interact with other organisms and physical habitats as a group and hence behave like organised wholes, i.e., population, community, ecosystem or even as the whole biosphere. Ecology explains to us all this. A particular aspect of this is the study of anthropogenic environmental degradation and the socio-political issues it has raised. This unit describes as well as takes a critical view of the above aspects.

RAMDEO MISRA
(1908-1998)

Ramdeo Misra is revered as the Father of Ecology in India. Born on 26 August 1908, Ramdeo Misra obtained Ph.D in Ecology (1937) under Prof. W. H. Pearsall, FRS, from Leeds University in UK. He established teaching and research in ecology at the Department of Botany of the Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi. His research laid the foundations for understanding of tropical communities and their succession, environmental responses of plant populations and productivity and nutrient cycling in tropical forest and grassland ecosystems. Misra formulated the first postgraduate course in ecology in India. Over 50 scholars obtained Ph. D degree under his supervision and moved on to other universities and research institutes to initiate ecology teaching and research across the country.

He was honoured with the Fellowships of the Indian National Science Academy and World Academy of Arts and Science, and the prestigious Sanjay Gandhi Award in Environment and Ecology. Due to his efforts, the Government of India established the National Committee for Environmental Planning and Coordination (1972) which, in later years, paved the way for the establishment of the Ministry of Environment and Forests (1984).

CHAPTER 13

ORGANISMS AND POPULATIONS

Our living world is fascinatingly diverse and amazingly complex. We can try to understand its complexity by investigating processes at various levels of biological organisation–macromolecules, cells, tissues, organs, individual organisms, population, communities and ecosystems and biomes. At any level of biological organisation we can ask two types of questions – for example, when we hear the bulbul singing early morning in the garden, we may ask – 'How does the bird sing?' Or, 'Why does the bird sing ?' The 'how-type' questions seek the *mechanism* behind the process while the 'why-type' questions seek the *significance* of the process. For the first question in our example, the answer might be in terms of the operation of the voice box and the vibrating bone in the bird, whereas for the second question the answer may lie in the bird's need to communicate with its mate during breeding season. When you observe nature around you with a scientific frame of mind you will certainly come up with many interesting questions of both types - *Why are night-blooming flowers generally white? How does the bee know which flower has nectar? Why does cactus have so many thorns? How does the chick recognise her own mother?*, and so on.

You have already learnt in previous classes that Ecology is a subject which studies the interactions among organisms and between the organism and its physical (abiotic) environment.

Ecology is basically concerned with four levels of biological organisation – organisms, populations, communities and biomes. In this chapter we explore ecology at organismic and population levels.

13.1 Organism and Its Environment

Ecology at the organismic level is essentially physiological ecology which tries to understand how different organisms are adapted to their environments in terms of not only survival but also reproduction. You may have learnt in earlier classes how the rotation of our planet around the Sun and the tilt of its axis cause annual variations in the intensity and duration of temperature, resulting in distinct seasons. These variations together with annual variation in precipitation (remember precipitation includes both rain and snow) account for the formation of major biomes such as desert, rain forest and tundra (Figure 13.1).

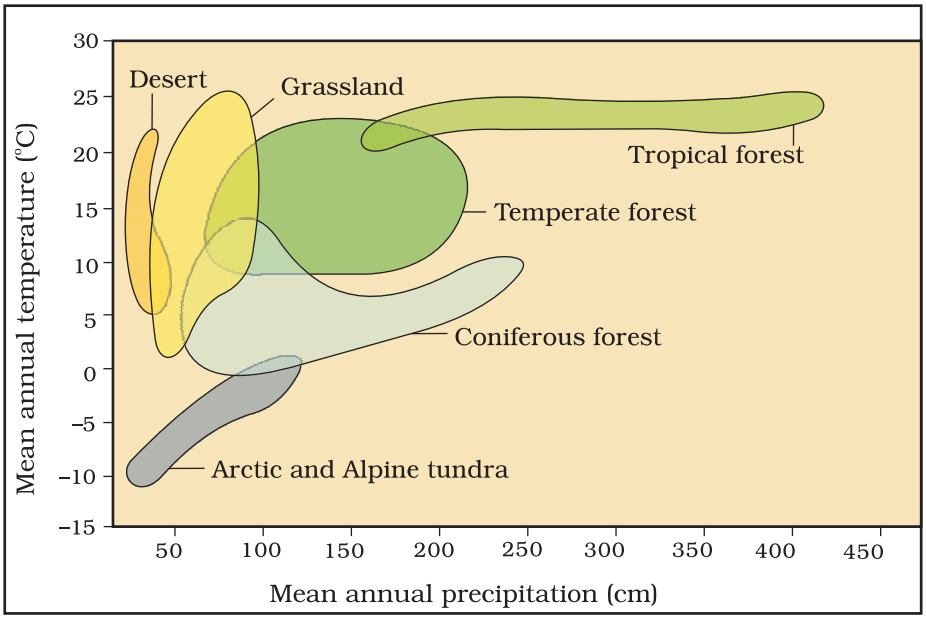


Figure 13.1 Biome distribution with respect to annual temperature and precipitation

Regional and local variations within each biome lead to the formation of a wide variety of habitats. Major biomes of India are shown in Figure 13.2. On planet Earth, life exists not just in a few favourable habitats but even in extreme and harsh habitats – scorching Rajasthan desert, perpetually rain-soaked Meghalaya forests, deep ocean trenches, torrential streams, permafrost polar regions, high mountain tops, boiling thermal springs, and stinking compost pits, to name a few. Even our intestine is a unique habitat for hundreds of species of microbes.

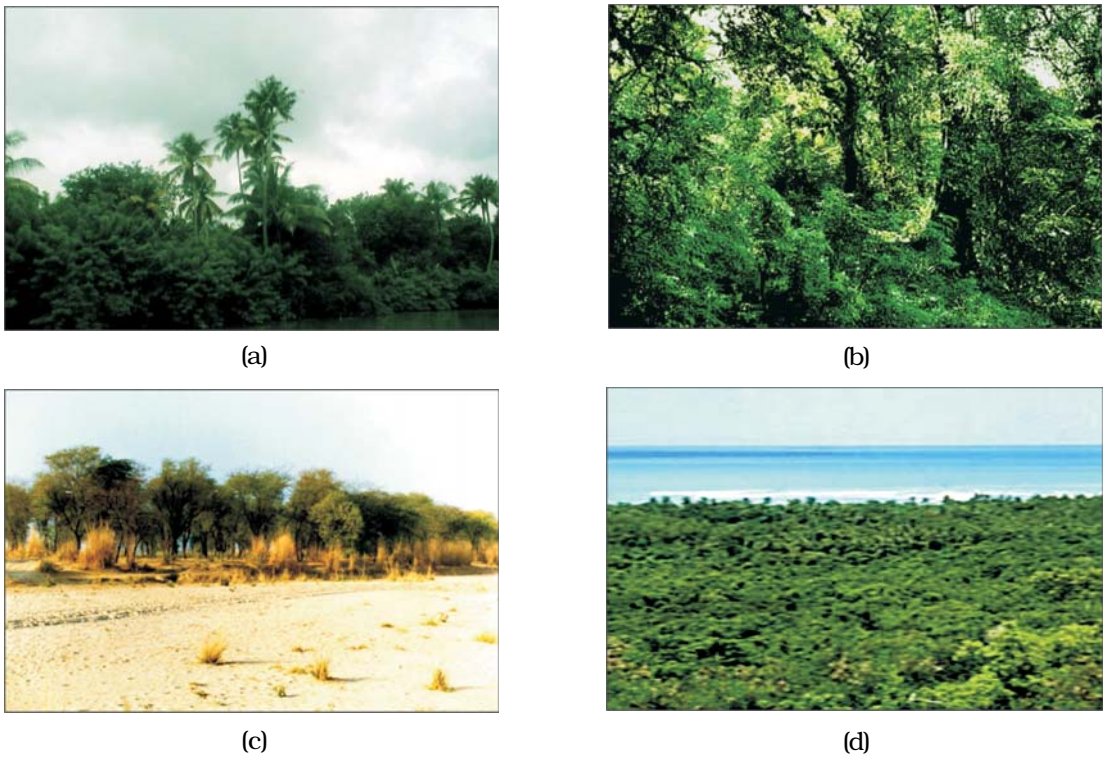


Figure 13.2 Major biomes of India : (a) Tropical rain forest; (b) Deciduous forest; (c) Desert; (d) Sea coast

What are the key elements that lead to so much variation in the physical and chemical conditions of different habitats? The most important ones are temperature, water, light and soil. We must remember that the physico-chemical (abiotic) components alone do not characterise the habitat of an organism completely; the habitat includes biotic components also – pathogens, parasites, predators and competitors – of the organism with which they interacts constantly. We assume that over a period of time, the organism had through natural selection, evolved adaptations to optimise its survival and reproduction in its habitat.

13.1.1 Major Abiotic Factors

Temperature: Temperature is the most ecologically relevant environmental factor. You are aware that the average temperature on land varies seasonally, decreases progressively from the equator towards the poles and from plains to the mountain tops. It ranges from subzero levels in polar areas and high altitudes to >50^{0}C in tropical deserts in summer. There are, however, unique habitats such as thermal springs and deep-sea hydrothermal vents where average temperatures exceed 100^0 C. It is general knowledge that mango trees do not and cannot grow in temperate countries like Canada and Germany, snow leopards are not found in Kerala forests and tuna fish are rarely caught beyond tropical

latitudes in the ocean. You can readily appreciate the significance of temperature to living organisms when you realise that it affects the kinetics of enzymes and through it the basal metabolism, activity and other physiological functions of the organism. A few organisms can tolerate and thrive in a wide range of temperatures (they are called *eurythermal*), but, a vast majority of them are restricted to a narrow range of temperatures (such organisms are called *stenothermal*). The levels of thermal tolerance of different species determine to a large extent their geographical distribution. *Can you think of a few eurythermal and stenothermal animals and plants?*

In recent years, there has been a growing concern about the gradually increasing average global temperatures (Chapter 16). *If this trend continues, would you expect the distributional range of some species to be affected?*

Water: Next to temperature, water is the most important factor influencing the life of organisms. In fact, life on earth originated in water and is unsustainable without water. Its availability is so limited in deserts that only special adaptations make it possible to live there. The productivity and distribution of plants is also heavily dependent on water. You might think that organisms living in oceans, lakes and rivers should not face any water-related problems, but it is not true. For aquatic organisms the quality (chemical composition, pH) of water becomes important. The salt concentration (measured as salinity in parts per thousand), is less than 5 per cent in inland waters, 30-35 per cent the sea and > 100 per cent in some hypersaline lagoons. Some organisms are tolerant of a wide range of salinities (euryhaline) but others are restricted to a narrow range (stenohaline). Many freshwater animals cannot live for long in sea water and vice versa because of the osmotic problems, they would face.

Light: Since plants produce food through photosynthesis, a process which is only possible when sunlight is available as a source of energy, we can quickly understand the importance of light for living organisms, particularly autotrophs. Many species of small plants (herbs and shrubs) growing in forests are adapted to photosynthesise optimally under very low light conditions because they are constantly overshadowed by tall, canopied trees. Many plants are also dependent on sunlight to meet their photoperiodic requirement for flowering. For many animals too, light is important in that they use the diurnal and seasonal variations in light intensity and duration (photoperiod) as cues for timing their foraging, reproductive and migratory activities. The availability of light on land is closely linked with that of temperature since the sun is the source for both. But, deep (>500m) in the oceans, the environment is perpetually dark and its inhabitants are not aware of the existence of a celestial source of energy called Sun. *What, then is their source of energy?*). The spectral quality of solar radiation is also important for life. The UV component of the spectrum is harmful to many organisms while not all the colour components of the visible spectrum are available for marine plants living

at different depths of the ocean. *Among the red, green and brown algae that inhabit the sea, which is likely to be found in the deepest waters? Why?*

Soil: The nature and properties of soil in different places vary; it is dependent on the climate, the weathering process, whether soil is transported or sedimentary and how soil development occurred. Various characteristics of the soil such as soil composition, grain size and aggregation determine the percolation and water holding capacity of the soils. These characteristics along with parameters such as pH, mineral composition and topography determine to a large extent the vegetation in any area. This is in turn dictates the type of animals that can be supported. Similarly, in the aquatic environment, the sediment-characteristics often determine the type of benthic animals that can thrive there.

13.1.2 Responses to Abiotic Factors

Having realised that the abiotic conditions of many habitats may vary drastically in time, we now ask–*how do the organisms living in such habitats cope or manage with stressful conditions*? But before attempting to answer this question, we should perhaps ask first why a highly variable external environment should bother organisms after all. One would expect that during the course of millions of years of their existence, many species would have evolved a relatively constant internal (within the body) environment that permits all biochemical reactions and physiological functions to proceed with maximal efficiency and thus, enhance the overall 'fitness' of the species. This constancy, for example, could be in terms of optimal temperature and osmotic concentration of body fluids. Ideally then, the organism should try to maintain the constancy of its internal environment (a process called *homeostasis*) despite varying external environmental conditions that tend to upset its homeostasis. Let us take an analogy to clarify this important concept. Suppose a person is able to perform his/her best when the temperature is 25^{0}C and wishes to maintain it so, even when it is scorchingly hot or freezingly cold outside. It could be achieved at home, in the car while travelling, and at workplace by using an air conditioner in summer and heater in winter. Then his/her performance would be always maximal regardless of the weather around him/her. Here the person's homeostasis is accomplished, not through physiological, but artificial means. *How do other living organisms cope with the situation*? Let us look at various possibilities (Figure 13.3).

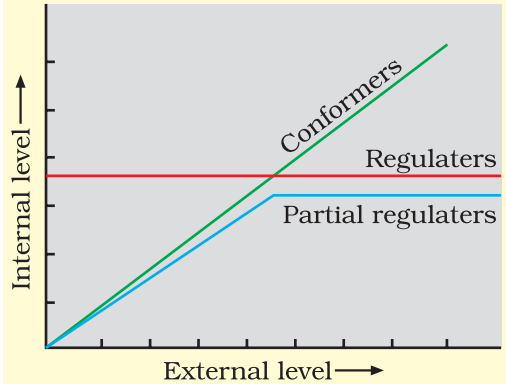


Figure 13.3 Diagrammatic representation of organismic response

(i) ***Regulate:*** Some organisms are able to maintain homeostasis by physiological (sometimes behavioural also) means which ensures constant body temperature, constant osmotic concentration, etc. All birds and mammals, and a very few lower vertebrate and invertebrate species are indeed capable of such regulation (thermoregulation and osmoregulation). Evolutionary biologists believe that the 'success' of mammals is largely due to their ability to maintain a constant body temperature and thrive whether they live in Antarctica or in the Sahara desert.

The mechanisms used by most mammals to regulate their body temperature are similar to the ones that we humans use. We maintain a constant body temperature of – 37^{0}C. In summer, when outside temperature is more than our body temperature, we sweat profusely. The resulting evaporative cooling, similar to what happens with a desert cooler in operation, brings down the body temperature. In winter when the temperature is much lower than 37^{0}C, we start to shiver, a kind of exercise which produces heat and raises the body temperature. Plants, on the other hand, do not have such mechanisms to maintain internal temperatures.

(ii) ***Conform:*** An overwhelming majority (99 per cent) of animals and nearly all plants cannot maintain a constant internal environment. Their body temperature changes with the ambient temperature. In aquatic animals, the osmotic concentration of the body fluids change with that of the ambient water osmotic concentration. These animals and plants are simply conformers. Considering the benefits of a constant internal environment to the organism, we must ask why these conformers had not evolved to become regulators. Recall the human analogy we used above; much as they like, how many people can really afford an air conditioner? Many simply 'sweat it out' and resign themselves to suboptimal performance in hot summer months. Thermoregulation is energetically expensive for many organisms. This is particularly true for small animals like shrews and humming birds. Heat loss or heat gain is a function of surface area. Since small animals have a larger surface area relative to their volume, they tend to lose body heat very fast when it is cold outside; then they have to expend much energy to generate body heat through metabolism. This is the main reason why very small animals are rarely found in polar regions. During the course of evolution, the costs and benefits of maintaining a constant internal environment are taken into consideration. Some species have evolved the ability to regulate, but only over a limited range of environmental conditions, beyond which they simply conform.

If the stressful external conditions are localised or remain only for a short duration, the organism has two other alternatives.

(iii) ***Migrate*:** The organism can move away temporarily from the stressful habitat to a more hospitable area and return when stressful period is over. In human analogy, this strategy is like a person moving from Delhi to Shimla for the duration of summer. Many animals, particularly birds, during winter undertake long-distance migrations to more hospitable areas. Every winter the famous Keolado National Park (Bhartpur) in Rajasthan host thousands of migratory birds coming from Siberia and other extremely cold northern regions.

(iv) ***Suspend:*** In bacteria, fungi and lower plants, various kinds of thick-walled spores are formed which help them to survive unfavourable conditions – these germinate on availability of suitable environment. In higher plants, seeds and some other vegetative reproductive structures serve as means to tide over periods of stress besides helping in dispersal – they germinate to form new plants under favourable moisture and temperature conditions. They do so by reducing their metabolic activity and going into a date of 'dormancy'.

In animals, the organism, if unable to migrate, might avoid the stress by escaping in time. The familiar case of bears going into *hibernation* during winter is an example of escape in time. Some snails and fish go into *aestivation* to avoid summer–related problems-heat and desiccation. Under unfavourable conditions many zooplankton species in lakes and ponds are known to enter *diapause*, a stage of suspended development.

13.1.3 Adaptations

While considering the various alternatives available to organisms for coping with extremes in their environment, we have seen that some are able to respond through certain physiological adjustments while others do so behaviourally (migrating temporarily to a less stressful habitat). These responses are also actually, their adaptations. So, we can say that **adaptation** is any attribute of the organism (morphological, physiological, behavioural) that enables the organism to survive and reproduce in its habitat. Many adaptations have evolved over a long evolutionary time and are genetically fixed. In the absence of an external source of water, the kangaroo rat in North American deserts is capable of meeting all its water requirements through its internal fat oxidation (in which water is a by product). It also has the ability to concentrate its urine so that minimal volume of water is used to remove excretory products.

Many desert plants have a thick cuticle on their leaf surfaces and have their stomata arranged in deep pits to minimise water loss through transpiration. They also have a special photosynthetic pathway (CAM) that enables their stomata to remain closed during day time. Some desert plants like *Opuntia*, have no leaves – they are reduced to spines–and the photosynthetic function is taken over by the flattened stems.

Mammals from colder climates generally have shorter ears and limbs to minimise heat loss. (This is called the *Allen's Rule*.) In the polar seas aquatic mammals like seals have a thick layer of fat (blubber) below their skin that acts as an insulator and reduces loss of body heat.

Some organisms possess adaptations that are *physiological* which allow them to respond quickly to a stressful situation. If you had ever been to any high altitude place (>3,500m Rohtang Pass near Manali and Mansarovar, in China occupied Tibet) you must have experienced what is called *altitude sickness*. Its symptoms include nausea, fatigue and heart palpitations. This is because in the low atmospheric pressure of high altitudes, the body does not get enough oxygen. But, gradually you get acclimatised and stop experiencing altitude sickness. *How did your body solve this problem*? The body compensates low oxygen availability by increasing red blood cell production, decreasing the binding capacity of hemoglobin and by increasing breathing rate. *Many tribes live in the high altitude of Himalayas. Find out if they normally have a higher red blood cell count (or total hemoglobin) than people living in the plains.*

In most animals, the metabolic reactions and hence all the physiological functions proceed optimally in a narrow temperature range (in humans, it is – 37^{0}C). But there are microbes (archaebacteria) that flourish in hot springs and deep sea hydrothermal vents where temperatures far exceed 100^{0}C. How is this possible?

Many fish thrive in Antarctic waters where the temperature is always below zero. *How do they manage to keep their body fluids from freezing*?

A large variety of marine invertebrates and fish live at great depths in the ocean where the pressure could be >100 times the normal atmospheric pressure that we experience. *How do they live under such crushing pressures and do they have any special enzymes*? Organisms living in such extreme environments show a fascinating array of biochemical adaptations.

Some organisms show behavioural responses to cope with variations in their environment. Desert lizards lack the physiological ability that mammals have to deal with the high temperatures of their habitat, but manage to keep their body temperature fairly constant by behavioural means. They bask in the sun and absorb heat when their body temperature drops below the comfort zone, but move into shade when the ambient temperature starts increasing. Some species are capable of burrowing into the soil to hide and escape from the above-ground heat.

13.2 Populations

13.2.1 Population Attributes

In nature, we rarely find isolated, single individuals of any species; majority of them live in groups in a well defined geographical area, share or compete for similar resources, potentially interbreed and thus constitute a

population. Although the term interbreeding implies sexual reproduction, a group of individuals resulting from even asexual reproduction is also generally considered a population for the purpose of ecological studies. All the cormorants in a wetland, rats in an abandoned dwelling, teakwood trees in a forest tract, bacteria in a culture plate and lotus plants in a pond, are some examples of a population. In earlier chapters you have learnt that although an individual organism is the one that has to cope with a changed environment, it is at the population level that natural selection operates to evolve the desired traits. Population ecology is, therefore, an important area of ecology because it links ecology to population genetics and evolution.

A population has certain attributes that an individual organism does not. An individual may have births and deaths, but a population has *birth rates* and *death rates*. In a population these rates refer to *per capita* births and deaths, respectively. The rates, hence, are expressed is change in numbers (increase or decrease) with respect to members of the population. Here is an example. If in a pond there are 20 lotus plants last year and through reproduction 8 new plants are added, taking the current population to 28, we calculate the birth rate as 8/20 = 0.4 offspring per lotus per year. If 4 individuals in a laboratory population of 40 fruitflies died during a specified time interval, say a week, the death rate in the population during that period is 4/40 = 0.1 individuals per fruitfly per week.

Another attribute characteristic of a population is *sex ratio*. An individual is either a male or a female but a population has a sex ratio (e.g., 60 per cent of the population are females and 40 per cent males).

A population at any given time is composed of individuals of different ages. If the age distribution (per cent individuals of a given age or age group) is plotted for the population, the resulting structure is called an age pyramid (Figure 13.4). For human population, the age pyramids generally show age distribution of males and females in a combined diagram. The shape of the pyramids reflects the growth status of the population - (a) whether it is growing, (b) stable or (c) declining.

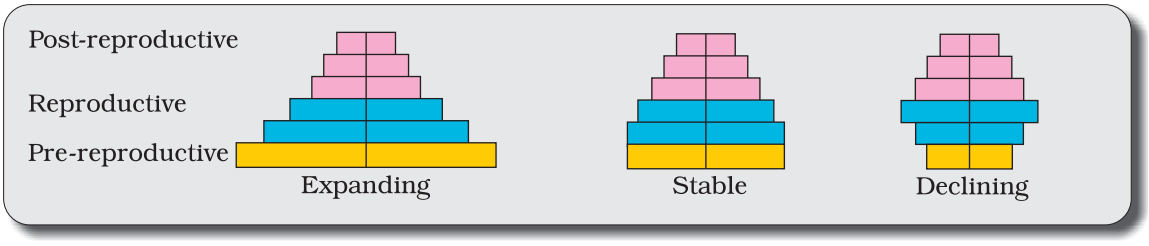


Figure 13.4 Representation of age pyramids for human population

The size of the population tells us a lot about its status in the habitat. Whatever ecological processes we wish to investigate in a population, be it the outcome of competition with another species, the impact of a

predator or the effect of a pesticide application, we always evaluate them in terms of any change in the population size. The size, in nature, could be as low as <10 (Siberian cranes at Bharatpur wetlands in any year) or go into millions (*Chlamydomonas* in a pond). Population size, more technically called **population density** (designated as N), need not necessarily be measured in numbers only. Although total number is generally the most appropriate measure of population density, it is in some cases either meaningless or difficult to determine. In an area, if there are 200 *Parthenium* plants but only a single huge banyan tree with a large canopy, stating that the population density of banyan is low relative to that of *Parthenium* amounts to underestimating the enormous role of the Banyan in that community. In such cases, the per cent cover or biomass is a more meaningful measure of the population size. Total number is again not an easily adoptable measure if the population is huge and counting is impossible or very time-consuming. *If you have a dense laboratory culture of bacteria in a petri dish what is the best measure to report its density?* Sometimes, for certain ecological investigations, there is no need to know the absolute population densities; relative densities serve the purpose equally well. For instance, the number of fish caught per trap is good enough measure of its total population density in the lake. We are mostly obliged to estimate population sizes indirectly, without actually counting them or seeing them. The tiger census in our national parks and tiger reserves is often based on pug marks and fecal pellets.

13.2.2 Population Growth

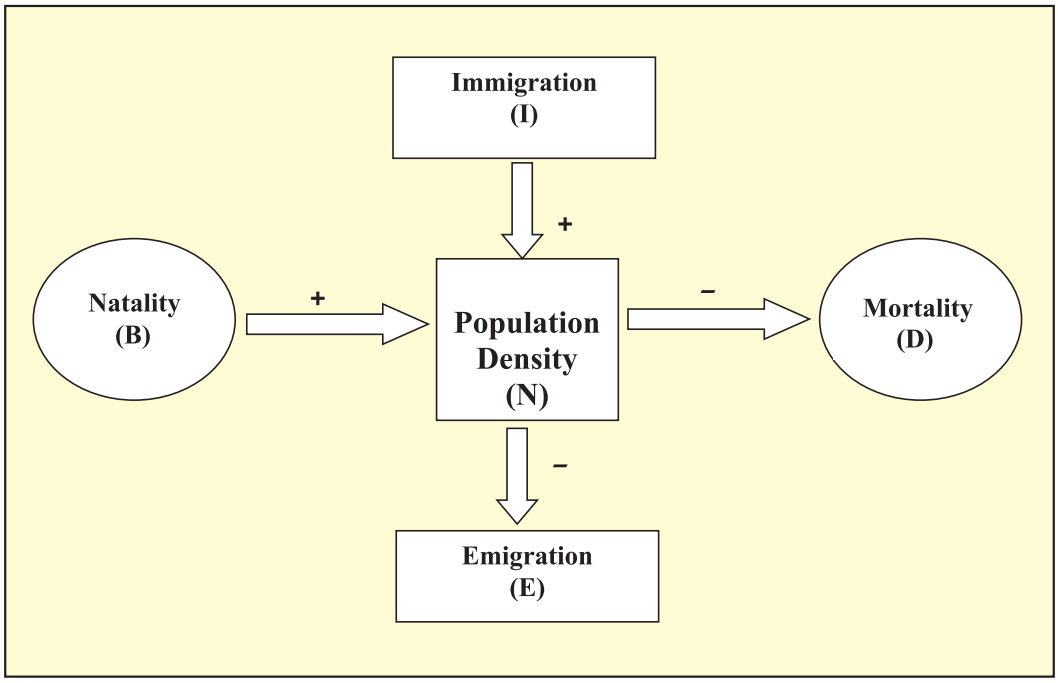
The size of a population for any species is not a static parameter. It keeps changing in time, depending on various factors including food availability, predation pressure and reduce weather. In fact, it is these changes in population density that give us some idea of what is happening to the population – whether it is flourishing or declining. Whatever might be the ultimate reasons, the density of a population in a given habitat during a given period, fluctuates due to changes in four basic processes, two of which (natality and immigration) contribute an increase in population density and two (mortality and emigration) to a decrease.

(i) ***Natality*** refers to the number of births during a given period in the population that are added to the initial density.

(ii) ***Mortality*** is the number of deaths in the population during a given period.

(iii) ***Immigration*** is the number of individuals of the same species that have come into the habitat from elsewhere during the time period under consideration.

(iv) ***Emigration*** is the number of individuals of the population who left the habitat and gone elsewhere during the time period under consideration.



So, if N is the population density at time t, then its density at time t +1 is

$$N_{t+1} = N_t + [(B + I) - (D + E)]$$

You can see from the above equation that population density will increase if the number of births plus the number of immigrants (B + I) is more than the number of deaths plus the number of emigrants (D + E), otherwise it will decrease. Under normal conditions, births and deaths are the most important factors influencing population density, the other two factors assuming importance only under special conditions. For instance, if a new habitat is just being colonised, immigration may contribute more significantly to population growth than birth rates.

Growth Models : Does the growth of a population with time show any specific and predictable pattern? We have been concerned about unbridled human population growth and problems created by it in our country and it is therefore natural for us to be curious if different animal populations in nature behave the same way or show some restraints on growth. Perhaps we can learn a lesson or two from nature on how to control population growth.

(i) ***Exponential growth:*** Resource (food and space) availability is obviously essential for the unimpeded growth of a population. Ideally, when resources in the habitat are unlimited, each species has the ability to realise fully its innate potential to grow in number, as Darwin observed while developing his theory of natural selection. Then the population grows in an exponential or geometric fashion. If in a population of size N, the birth rates (not total number but

per capita births) are represented as *b* and death rates (again, *per capita* death rates) as *d*, then the increase or decrease in N during a unit time period t (dN/dt) will be

$$dN/dt = (b - d) \times N$$

Let (b–d) = r, then

$$dN/dt = rN$$

The r in this equation is called the 'intrinsic rate of natural increase' and is a very important parameter chosen for assessing impacts of any biotic or abiotic factor on population growth.

To give you some idea about the magnitude of r values, for the Norway rat the r is 0.015, and for the flour beetle it is 0.12. In 1981, the r value for human population in India was 0.0205. *Find out what the current r value is. For calculating it, you need to know the birth rates and death rates.*

The above equation describes the exponential or geometric growth pattern of a population (Figure 13.5) and results in a J-shaped curve when we plot N in relation to time. If you are familiar with basic calculus, you can derive the integral form of the exponential growth equation as

$$N_t = N_0 e^{rt}$$

where

N_t = Population density after time t

N_0 = Population density at time zero

r = intrinsic rate of natural increase

e = the base of natural logarithms (2.71828)

Any species growing exponentially under unlimited resource conditions can reach enormous population densities in a short time. Darwin showed how even a slow growing animal like elephant could reach enormous numbers in the absence of checks. The following is an anecdote popularly narrated to demonstrate dramatically how fast a huge population could build up when growing exponentially.

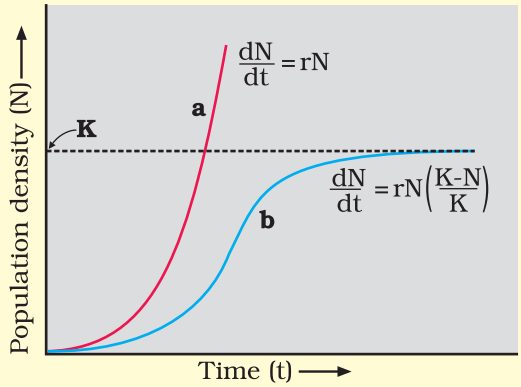


Figure 13.5 Population growth curve
a when responses are not limiting the growth, plot is exponential,
b when responses are limiting the growth, plot is logistic,
K is carrying capacity

The king and the minister sat for a chess game. The king, confident of winning the game, was ready to accept any bet proposed by the minister. The minister humbly said that if he won, he wanted only some wheat grains, the quantity of which is to be calculated by placing on the chess board one grain in Square 1, then two in Square 2, then four in Square 3, and eight in Square 4, and so on, doubling each time the previous quantity of wheat on the next square until all the 64 squares were filled. The king accepted the seemingly silly bet and started the game, but unluckily for him, the minister won. The king felt that fulfilling

the minister's bet was so easy. He started with a single grain on the first square and proceeded to fill the other squares following minister's suggested procedure, but by the time he covered half the chess board, the king realised to his dismay that all the wheat produced in his entire kingdom pooled together would still be inadequate to cover all the 64 squares. Now think of a tiny Paramecium starting with just one individual and through binary fission, doubling in numbers every day, and imagine what a mind-boggling population size it would reach in 64 days. (provided food and space remain unlimited)

(ii) ***Logistic growth:*** No population of any species in nature has its disposal unlimited resources to permit exponential growth. This leads to competition between individuals for limited resources. Eventually, the 'fittest' individual will survive and reproduce. The governments of many countries have also realised this fact and introduced various restraints with a view to limit human population growth. In nature, a given habitat has enough resources to support a maximum possible number, beyond which no further growth is possible. Let us call this limit as nature's *carrying capacity* (K) for that species in that habitat.

A population growing in a habitat with limited resources show initially a lag phase, followed by phases of acceleration and deceleration and finally an asymptote, when the population density reaches the carrying capacity. A plot of N in relation to time (t) results in a sigmoid curve. This type of population growth is called *Verhulst-Pearl Logistic Growth* (Figure 13.5) and is described by the following equation:

$$dN/dt = rN\left(\frac{K - N}{K}\right)$$

Where N = Population density at time t
r = Intrinsic rate of natural increase
K = Carrying capacity

Since resources for growth for most animal populations are finite and become limiting sooner or later, the logistic growth model is considered a more realistic one.

Gather from Government Census data the population figures for India for the last 100 years, plot them and check which growth pattern is evident.

13.2.3 Life History Variation

Populations evolve to maximise their reproductive fitness, also called Darwinian fitness (high r value), in the habitat in which they live. Under a particular set of selection pressures, organisms evolve towards the most

efficient reproductive strategy. Some organisms breed only once in their lifetime (Pacific salmon fish, bamboo) while others breed many times during their lifetime (most birds and mammals). Some produce a large number of small-sized offspring (Oysters, pelagic fishes) while others produce a small number of large-sized offspring (birds, mammals). So, which is desirable for maximising fitness? Ecologists suggest that life history traits of organisms have evolved in relation to the constraints imposed by the abiotic and biotic components of the habitat in which they live. Evolution of life history traits in different species is currently an important area of research being conducted by ecologists.

13.2.4 Population Interactions

Can you think of any natural habitat on earth that is inhabited just by a single species? There is no such habitat and such a situation is even inconceivable. For any species, the minimal requirement is one more species on which it can feed. Even a plant species, which makes its own food, cannot survive alone; it needs soil microbes to break down the organic matter in soil and return the inorganic nutrients for absorption. And then, how will the plant manage pollination without an animal agent? It is obvious that in nature, animals, plants and microbes do not and cannot live in isolation but interact in various ways to form a biological community. Even in minimal communities, many interactive linkages exist, although all may not be readily apparent.

Interspecific interactions arise from the interaction of populations of two different species. They could be beneficial, detrimental or neutral (neither harm nor benefit) to one of the species or both. Assigning a **'+'** sign for beneficial interaction, **'-'** sign for detrimental and 0 for neutral interaction, let us look at all the possible outcomes of interspecific interactions (Table13.1).

Table 13.1 : Population Interactions

Species A	Species B	Name of Interaction
+	+	*Mutualism*
–	–	*Competition*
+	–	*Predation*
+	–	*Parasitism*
+	*0*	*Commensalism*
–	*0*	*Amensalism*

Both the species benefit in ***mutualism*** and both lose in ***competition*** in their interactions with each other. In both ***parasitism*** and ***Predation*** only one species benefits (parasite and predator, respectively) and the interaction

is detrimental to the other species (host and prey, respectively). The interaction where one species is benefitted and the other is neither benefitted nor harmed is called **commensalism**. In **amensalism** on the other hand one species is harmed whereas the other is unaffected. Predation, parasitism and commensalisms share a common characteristic– the interacting species live closely together.

(i) ***Predation****: What would happen to all the energy fixed by autotrophic organisms if the community has no animals to eat the plants*? You can think of predation as nature's way of transferring to higher trophic levels the energy fixed by plants. When we think of predator and prey, most probably it is the tiger and the deer that readily come to our mind, but a sparrow eating any seed is no less a predator. Although animals eating plants are categorised separately as *herbivores*, they are, in a broad ecological context, not very different from predators.

Besides acting as 'conduits' for energy transfer across trophic levels, predators play other important roles. They keep prey populations under control. But for predators, prey species could achieve very high population densities and cause ecosystem instability. When certain exotic species are introduced into a geographical area, they become invasive and start spreading fast because the invaded land does not have its natural predators. The prickly pear cactus introduced into Australia in the early 1920's caused havoc by spreading rapidly into millions of hectares of rangeland. Finally, the invasive cactus was brought under control only after a cactus-feeding predator (a moth) from its natural habitat was introduced into the country. *Biological control* methods adopted in agricultural pest control are based on the ability of the predator to regulate prey population. Predators also help in maintaining species diversity in a community, by reducing the intensity of competition among competing prey species. In the rocky intertidal communities of the American Pacific Coast the starfish *Pisaster* is an important predator. In a field experiment, when all the starfish were removed from an enclosed intertidal area, more than 10 species of invertebrates became extinct within a year, because of inter-specific competition.

If a predator is too efficient and overexploits its prey, then the prey might become extinct and following it, the predator will also become extinct for lack of food. This is the reason why predators in nature are 'prudent'. Prey species have evolved various defenses to lessen the impact of predation. Some species of insects and frogs are cryptically-coloured (*camouflaged*) to avoid being detected easily by the predator. Some are poisonous and therefore avoided by the predators. The Monarch butterfly is highly distasteful to its predator

(bird) because of a special chemical present in its body. Interestingly, the butterfly acquires this chemical during its caterpillar stage by feeding on a poisonous weed.

For plants, herbivores are the predators. Nearly 25 per cent of all insects are known to be *phytophagous* (feeding on plant sap and other parts of plants). The problem is particularly severe for plants because, unlike animals, they cannot run away from their predators. Plants therefore have evolved an astonishing variety of morphological and chemical defences against herbivores. Thorns (*Acacia*, *Cactus*) are the most common morphological means of defence. Many plants produce and store chemicals that make the herbivore sick when they are eaten, inhibit feeding or digestion, disrupt its reproduction or even kill it. You must have seen the weed *Calotropis* growing in abandoned fields. The plant produces highly poisonous cardiac glycosides and that is why you never see any cattle or goats browsing on this plant. A wide variety of chemical substances that we extract from plants on a commercial scale (nicotine, caffeine, quinine, strychnine, opium, etc.,) are produced by them actually as defences against grazers and browsers.

(ii) ***Competition:*** When Darwin spoke of the struggle for existence and survival of the fittest in nature, he was convinced that interspecific competition is a potent force in organic evolution. It is generally believed that competition occurs when closely related species compete for the same resources that are limiting, but this is not entirely true. Firstly, totally unrelated species could also compete for the same resource. For instance, in some shallow South American lakes visiting flamingoes and resident fishes compete for their common food, the zooplankton in the lake. Secondly, resources need not be limiting for competition to occur; in interference competition, the feeding efficiency of one species might be reduced due to the interfering and inhibitory presence of the other species, even if resources (food and space) are abundant. Therefore, competition is best defined as a process in which the fitness of one species (measured in terms of its 'r' the intrinsic rate of increase) is significantly lower in the presence of another species. It is relatively easy to demonstrate in laboratory experiments, as Gause and other experimental ecologists did, when resources are limited the competitively superior species will eventually eliminate the other species, but evidence for such competitive exclusion occurring in nature is not always conclusive. Strong and persuasive circumstantial evidence does exist however in some cases. The Abingdon tortoise in Galapagos Islands became extinct within a decade after goats were introduced on the island, apparently due to the greater browsing efficiency of the goats. Another evidence for the occurrence of competition in nature comes from what is called

'competitive release'. A species whose distribution is restricted to a small geographical area because of the presence of a competitively superior species, is found to expand its distributional range dramatically when the competing species is experimentally removed. Connell's elegant field experiments showed that on the rocky sea coasts of Scotland, the larger and competitively superior barnacle *Balanus* dominates the intertidal area, and excludes the smaller barnacle *Chathamalus* from that zone. In general, herbivores and plants appear to be more adversely affected by competition than carnivores.

Gause's '*Competitive Exclusion Principle*' states that two closely related species competing for the same resources cannot co-exist indefinitely and the competitively inferior one will be eliminated eventually. This may be true if resources are limiting, but not otherwise. More recent studies do not support such gross generalisations about competition. While they do not rule out the occurrence of interspecific competition in nature, they point out that species facing competition might evolve mechanisms that promote co-existence rather than exclusion. One such mechanism is 'resource partitioning'. If two species compete for the same resource, they could avoid competition by choosing, for instance, different times for feeding or different foraging patterns. MacArthur showed that five closely related species of warblers living on the same tree were able to avoid competition and co-exist due to behavioural differences in their foraging activities.

(iii) ***Parasitism:*** Considering that the parasitic mode of life ensures free lodging and meals, it is not surprising that parasitism has evolved in so many taxonomic groups from plants to higher vertebrates. Many parasites have evolved to be host-specific (they can parasitise only a single species of host) in such a way that both host and the parasite tend to co-evolve; that is, if the host evolves special mechanisms for rejecting or resisting the parasite, the parasite has to evolve mechanisms to counteract and neutralise them, in order to be successful with the same host species. In accordance with their life styles, parasites evolved special adaptations such as the loss of unnecessary sense organs, presence of adhesive organs or suckers to cling on to the host, loss of digestive system and high reproductive capacity. The life cycles of parasites are often complex, involving one or two intermediate hosts or vectors to facilitate parasitisation of its primary host. The human liver fluke (a trematode parasite) depends on two intermediate hosts (a snail and a fish) to complete its life cycle. The malarial parasite needs a vector (mosquito) to spread to other hosts. Majority of the parasites

harm the host; they may reduce the survival, growth and reproduction of the host and reduce its population density. They might render the host more vulnerable to predation by making it physically weak. *Do you believe that an ideal parasite should be able to thrive within the host without harming it? Then why didn't natural selection lead to the evolution of such totally harmless parasites*?

Parasites that feed on the external surface of the host organism are called *ectoparasites*. The most familiar examples of this group are the lice on humans and ticks on dogs. Many marine fish are infested with ectoparasitic copepods. *Cuscuta*, a parasitic plant that is commonly found growing on hedge plants, has lost its chlorophyll and leaves in the course of evolution. It derives its nutrition from the host plant which it parasitises. The female mosquito is not considered a parasite, although it needs our blood for reproduction. *Can you explain why?*

In contrast, *endoparasites* are those that live inside the host body at different sites (liver, kidney, lungs, red blood cells, etc.). The life cycles of endoparasites are more complex because of their extreme specialisation. Their morphological and anatomical features are greatly simplified while emphasising their reproductive potential.

Brood parasitism in birds is a fascinating example of parasitism in which the parasitic bird lays its eggs in the nest of its host and lets the host incubate them. During the course of evolution, the eggs of the parasitic bird have evolved to resemble the host's egg in size and colour to reduce the chances of the host bird detecting the foreign eggs and ejecting them from the nest. Try to follow the movements of the cuckoo (koel) and the crow in your neighborhood park during the breeding season (spring to summer) and watch brood parasitism in action.

(iv) ***Commensalism:*** This is the interaction in which one species benefits and the other is neither harmed nor benefited. An orchid growing as an *epiphyte* on a mango branch, and barnacles growing on the back of a whale benefit while neither the mango tree nor the whale derives any apparent benefit. The cattle egret and grazing cattle in close association, a sight you are most likely to catch if you live in farmed rural areas, is a classic example of commensalism. The egrets always forage close to where the cattle are grazing because the cattle, as they move, stir up and flush out from the vegetation insects that otherwise might be difficult for the egrets to find and catch. Another example of commensalism is the interaction between sea anemone that has stinging tentacles and the clown fish that

(a) (b)

Figure 13.6 Mutual relationship between fig tree and wasp: (a) Fig flower is pollinated by wasp; (b) Wasp laying eggs in a fig fruit

lives among them. The fish gets protection from predators which stay away from the stinging tentacles. The anemone does not appear to derive any benefit by hosting the clown fish.

(v) ***Mutualism:*** This interaction confers benefits on both the interacting species. Lichens represent an intimate mutualistic relationship between a fungus and photosynthesising algae or cyanobacteria. Similarly, the *mycorrhizae* are associations between fungi and the roots of higher plants. The fungi help the plant in the absorption of essential nutrients from the soil while the plant in turn provides the fungi with energy-yielding carbohydrates.

The most spectacular and evolutionarily fascinating examples of mutualism are found in plant-animal relationships. Plants need the help of animals for pollinating their flowers and dispersing their seeds. Animals obviously have to be paid 'fees' for the services that plants expect from them. Plants offer rewards or fees in the form of pollen and nectar for pollinators and juicy and nutritious fruits for seed dispersers. But the mutually beneficial system should also be safeguarded against 'cheaters', for example, animals that try to steal nectar without aiding in pollination. Now you can see why plant-animal interactions often involve *co-evolution* of the mutualists, that is, the evolutions of the flower and its pollinator species are tightly linked with one another. In many species of fig trees, there is a tight one-to-one relationship with the pollinator species of wasp (Figure 13.6). It means that a given fig species can be pollinated only by its 'partner' wasp species and no other species. The female wasp uses the fruit not only as an oviposition (egg-laying) site but uses the developing seeds within the fruit for nourishing its larvae. The wasp pollinates the fig inflorescence while searching

Figure 13.7 Showing bee a pollinator on orchid flower

for suitable egg-laying sites. In return for the favour of pollination the fig offers the wasp some of its developing seeds, as food for the developing wasp larvae.

Orchids show a bewildering diversity of floral patterns many of which have evolved to attract the right pollinator insect (bees and bumblebees) and ensure guaranteed pollination by it (Figure 13.7). Not all orchids offer rewards. The Mediterranean orchid *Ophrys* employs 'sexual deceit' to get pollination done by a species of bee. One petal of its flower bears an uncanny resemblance to the female of the bee in size, colour and markings. The male bee is attracted to what it perceives as a female, 'pseudocopulates' with the flower, and during that process is dusted with pollen from the flower. When this same bee 'pseudocopulates' with another flower, it transfers pollen to it and thus, pollinates the flower. Here you can see how co-evolution operates. If the female bee's colour patterns change even slightly for any reason during evolution, pollination success will be reduced unless the orchid flower co-evolves to maintain the resemblance of its petal to the female bee.

SUMMARY

As a branch of biology, Ecology is the study of the relationships of living organisms with the abiotic (physico-chemical factors) and biotic components (other species) of their environment. It is concerned with four levels of biological organisation-organisms, populations, communities and biomes.

Temperature, light, water and soil are the most important physical factors of the environment to which the organisms are adapted in various ways. Maintenance of a constant internal environment (*homeostasis*) by the organisms contributes to optimal performance, but only some organisms (regulators) are capable of homeostasis in the face of changing external environment. Others either partially regulate their internal environment or simply conform. A few other species have evolved adaptations to avoid unfavourable conditions in space (migration) or in time (aestivation, hibernation, and diapause).

Evolutionary changes through natural selection take place at the population level and hence, population ecology is an important area of ecology. A population is a group of individuals of a given species sharing or competing for similar resources in a defined geographical area. Populations have attributes that individual organisms do not- birth rates and death rates, sex ratio and age

distribution. The proportion of different age groups of males and females in a population is often presented graphically as age pyramid; its shape indicates whether a population is stationary, growing or declining.

Ecological effects of any factors on a population are generally reflected in its size (population density), which may be expressed in different ways (numbers, biomass, per cent cover, etc.,) depending on the species.

Populations grow through births and immigration and decline through deaths and emigration. When resources are unlimited, the growth is usually exponential but when resources become progressively limiting, the growth pattern turns logistic. In either case, growth is ultimately limited by the carrying capacity of the environment. The intrinsic rate of natural increase (*r*) is a measure of the inherent potential of a population to grow.

In nature populations of different species in a habitat do not live in isolation but interact in many ways. Depending on the outcome, these interactions between two species are classified as competition (both species suffer), predation and parasitism (one benefits and the other suffers), commensalism (one benefits and the other is unaffected), amensalism (one is harmed, other unaffected) and mutualism (both species benefit). Predation is a very important process through which trophic energy transfer is facilitated and some predators help in controlling their prey populations. Plants have evolved diverse morphological and chemical defenses against herbivory. In competition, it is presumed that the superior competitor eliminates the inferior one (the Competitive Exclusion Principle), but many closely related species have evolved various mechanisms which facilitate their co-existence. Some of the most fascinating cases of mutualism in nature are seen in plant-pollinator interactions.

EXERCISES

1. How is diapause different from hibernation?
2. If a marine fish is placed in a fresh water aquarium, will the fish be able to survive? Why or why not?
3. Define phenotypic adaptation. Give one example.
4. Most living organisms cannot survive at temperature above 45^{0}C. How are some microbes able to live in habitats with temperatures exceeding 100^{0}C?
5. List the attributes that populations but not individuals possess.
6. If a population growing exponentially double in size in 3 years, what is the intrinsic rate of increase (r) of the population?
7. Name important defence mechanisms in plants against herbivory.

8. An orchid plant is growing on the branch of mango tree. How do you describe this interaction between the orchid and the mango tree?
9. What is the ecological principle behind the biological control method of managing with pest insects?
10. Distinguish between the following:
    (a) Hibernation and Aestivation
    (b) Ectotherms and Endotherms
11. Write a short note on
    (a) Adaptations of desert plants and animals
    (b) Adaptations of plants to water scarcity
    (c) Behavioural adaptations in animals
    (d) Importance of light to plants
    (e) Effect of temperature or water scarcity and the adaptations of animals.
12. List the various abiotic environmental factors.
13. Give an example for:
    (a) An endothermic animal
    (b) An ectothermic animal
    (c) An organism of benthic zone
14. Define population and community.
15. Define the following terms and give one example for each:
    (a) Commensalism
    (b) Parasitism
    (c) Camouflage
    (d) Mutualism
    (e) Interspecific competition
16. With the help of suitable diagram describe the logistic population growth curve.
17. Select the statement which explains best parasitism.
    (a) One organism is benefited.
    (b) Both the organisms are benefited.
    (c) One organism is benefited, other is not affected.
    (d) One organism is benefited, other is affected.
18. List any three important characteristics of a population and explain.

CHAPTER 14

ECOSYSTEM

An ecosystem can be visualised as a functional unit of nature, where living organisms interact among themselves and also with the surrounding physical environment. Ecosystem varies greatly in size from a small pond to a large forest or a sea. Many ecologists regard the entire biosphere as a global ecosystem, as a composite of all local ecosystems on Earth. Since this system is too much big and complex to be studied at one time, it is convenient to divide it into two basic categories, namely the **terrestrial** and the **aquatic**. Forest, grassland and desert are some examples of terrestrial ecosystems; pond, lake, wetland, river and estuary are some examples of aquatic ecosystems. Crop fields and an aquarium may also be considered as man-made ecosystems.

We will first look at the structure of the ecosystem, in order to appreciate the input (productivity), transfer of energy (food chain/web, nutrient cycling) and the output (degradation and energy loss). We will also look at the relationships – cycles, chains, webs – that are created as a result of these energy flows within the system and their inter- relationship.

14.1 Ecosystem – Structure and Function

In chapter 13, you have looked at the various components of the environment- abiotic and biotic. You studied how the individual biotic and abiotic factors affected each other and their surrounding. Let us look at these components in a more integrated manner and see how the flow of energy takes place within these components of the ecosystem.

Interaction of biotic and abiotic components result in a physical structure that is characteristic for each type of ecosystem. Identification and enumeration of plant and animal species of an ecosystem gives its species composition. Vertical distribution of different species occupying different levels is called **stratification**. For example, trees occupy top vertical strata or layer of a forest, shrubs the second and herbs and grasses occupy the bottom layers.

The components of the ecosystem are seen to function as a unit when you consider the following aspects:

(i) Productivity;
(ii) Decomposition;
(iii) Energy flow; and
(iv) Nutrient cycling.

To understand the ethos of an aquatic ecosystem let us take a small pond as an example. This is fairly a self-sustainable unit and rather simple example that explain even the complex interactions that exist in an aquatic ecosystem. A pond is a shallow water body in which all the above mentioned four basic components of an ecosystem are well exhibited. The abiotic component is the water with all the dissolved inorganic and organic substances and the rich soil deposit at the bottom of the pond. The solar input, the cycle of temperature, day-length and other climatic conditions regulate the rate of function of the entire pond. The autotrophic components include the phytoplankton, some algae and the floating, submerged and marginal plants found at the edges. The consumers are represented by the zooplankton, the free swimming and bottom dwelling forms. The decomposers are the fungi, bacteria and flagellates especially abundant in the bottom of the pond. This system performs all the functions of any ecosystem and of the biosphere as a whole, i.e., conversion of inorganic into organic material with the help of the radiant energy of the sun by the autotrophs; consumption of the autotrophs by heterotrophs; decomposition and mineralisation of the dead matter to release them back for reuse by the autotrophs, these event are repeated over and over again. There is unidirectional movement of energy towards the higher trophic levels and its dissipation and loss as heat to the environment.

14.2. Productivity

A constant input of solar energy is the basic requirement for any ecosystem to function and sustain. **Primary production** is defined as the amount of

biomass or organic matter produced per unit area over a time period by plants during photosynthesis. It is expressed in terms of weight (g^{-2}) or energy (kcal m^{-2}). The rate of biomass production is called **productivity**. It is expressed in terms of g^{-2} yr^{-1} or (kcal m^{-2}) yr^{-1} to compare the productivity of different ecosystems. It can be divided into gross primary productivity (GPP) and net primary productivity (NPP). **Gross primary productivity** of an ecosystem is the rate of production of organic matter during photosynthesis. A considerable amount of GPP is utilised by plants in respiration. Gross primary productivity minus respiration losses (R), is the **net primary productivity** (NPP).

$$GPP - R = NPP$$

Net primary productivity is the available biomass for the consumption to heterotrophs (herbiviores and decomposers). **Secondary productivity** is defined as the rate of formation of new organic matter by consumers.

Primary productivity depends on the plant species inhabiting a particular area. It also depends on a variety of environmental factors, availability of nutrients and photosynthetic capacity of plants. Therefore, it varies in different types of ecosystems. The annual net primary productivity of the whole biosphere is approximately 170 billion tons (dry weight) of organic matter. Of this, despite occupying about 70 per cent of the surface, the productivity of the oceans are only 55 billion tons. Rest of course, is on land. *Discuss the main reason for the low productivity of ocean with your teacher.*

14.3 Decomposition

You may have heard of the earthworm being referred to as the farmer's 'friend'. This is so because they help in the breakdown of complex organic matter as well as in loosening of the soil. Similarly, decomposers break down complex organic matter into inorganic substances like carbon dioxide, water and nutrients and the process is called **decomposition**. Dead plant remains such as leaves, bark, flowers and dead remains of animals, including fecal matter, constitute **detritus**, which is the raw material for decomposition. The important steps in the process of decomposition are fragmentation, leaching, catabolism, humification and mineralisation.

Detritivores (e.g., earthworm) break down detritus into smaller particles. This process is called **fragmentation.** By the process of **leaching,** water-soluble inorganic nutrients go down into the soil horizon and get precipitated as unavailable salts. Bacterial and fungal enzymes degrade detritus into simpler inorganic substances. This process is called as **catabolism**.

It is important to note that all the above steps in decomposition operate simultaneously on the detritus (Figure 14.1). Humification and mineralisation occur during decomposition in the soil. **Humification** leads

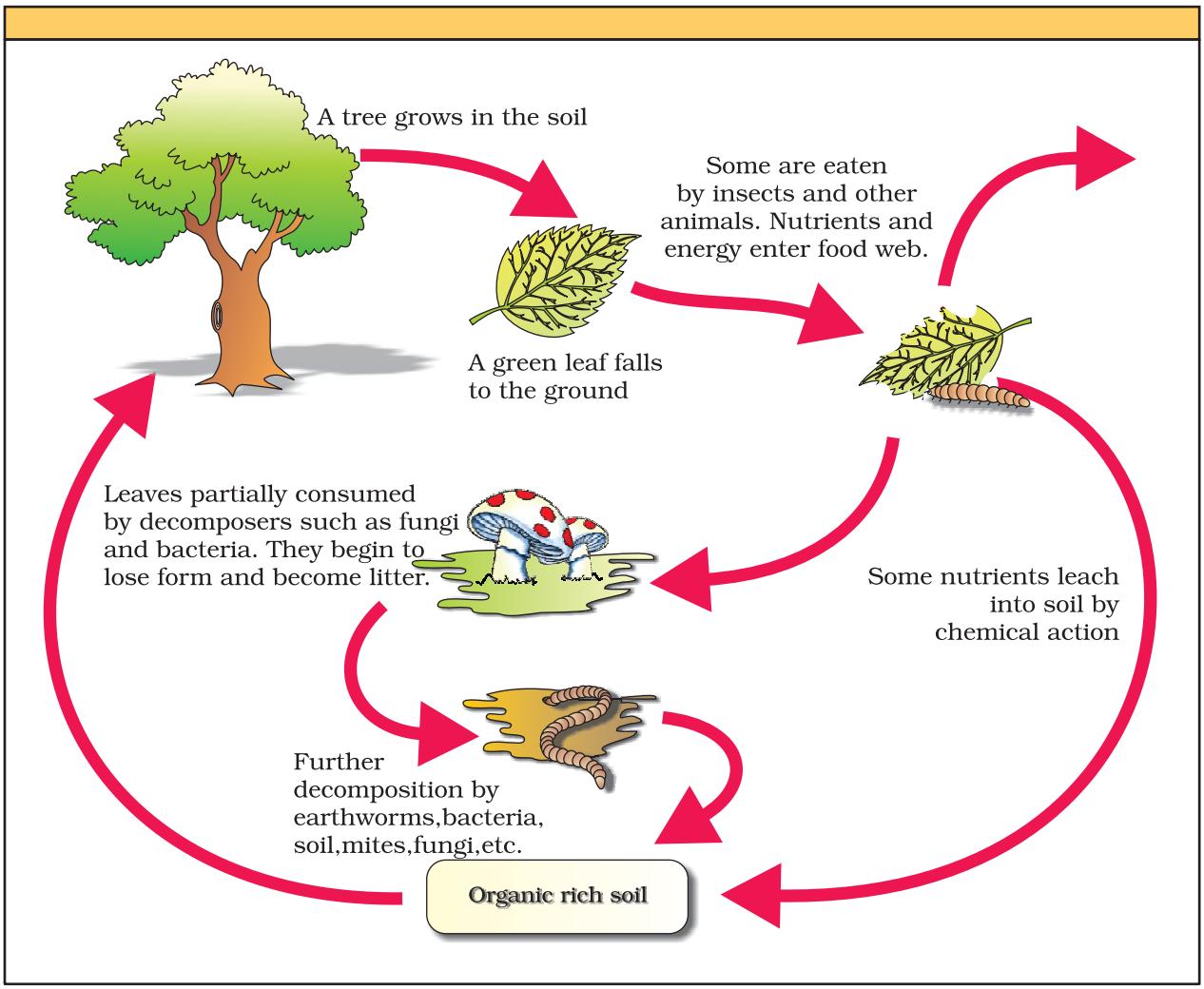


Figure 14.1 Diagrammatic representation of decomposition cycle in a terrestrial ecosystem

to accumulation of a dark coloured amorphous substance called **humus** that is highly resistant to microbial action and undergoes decomposition at an extremely slow rate. Being colloidal in nature it serves as a reservoir of nutrients. The humus is further degraded by some microbes and release of inorganic nutrients occur by the process known as **mineralisation**.

Decomposition is largely an oxygen-requiring process. The rate of decomposition is controlled by chemical composition of detritus and climatic factors. In a particular climatic condition, decomposition rate is slower if detritus is rich in lignin and chitin, and quicker, if detritus is rich in nitrogen and water-soluble substances like sugars. Temperature and soil moisture are the most important climatic factors that regulate decomposition through their effects on the activities of soil microbes. Warm and moist environment favour decomposition whereas low temperature and anaerobiosis inhibit decomposition resulting in build up of organic materials.

14.4 Energy Flow

Except for the deep sea hydro-thermal ecosystem, sun is the only source of energy for all ecosystems on Earth. Of the incident solar radiation less than 50 per cent of it is **photosynthetically active radiation** (PAR). We know that plants and photosynthetic and chemosynthetic bacteria (autotrophs), fix suns' radiant energy to make food from simple inorganic materials. Plants capture only 2-10 per cent of the PAR and this small amount of energy sustains the entire living world. So, it is very important to know how the solar energy captured by plants flows through different organisms of an ecosystem. All organisms are dependent for their food on producers, either directly or indirectly. So you find unidirectional flow of energy from the sun to producers and then to consumers. *Is this in keeping with the first law of thermodynamics?*

Further, ecosystems are not exempt from the Second Law of thermodynamics. They need a constant supply of energy to synthesise the molecules they require, to counteract the universal tendency toward increasing disorderliness.

The green plant in the ecosystem-terminology are called **producers**. In a terrestrial ecosystem, major producers are herbaceous and woody plants. Likewise, primary producers in an aquatic ecosystem are various species like phytoplankton, algae and higher plants.

You have read about the food chains and webs that exit in nature. Starting from the plants (or producers) food chains or rather webs are formed such that an animal feeds on a plant or on another animal and in turn is food for another. The chain or web is formed because of this interdependency. No energy that is trapped into an organism remains in it for ever. The energy trapped by the producer, hence, is either passed on to a consumer or the organism dies. Death of organism is the beginning of the detritus food chain/web.

All animals depend on plants (directly or indirectly) for their food needs. They are hence called **consumers** and also heterotrophs. If they feed on the producers, the plants, they are called primary consumers, and if the animals eat other animals which in turn eat the plants (or their produce) they are called secondary consumers. Likewise, you could have tertiary consumers too. Obviously the primary consumers will be **herbivores**. Some common herbivores are insects, birds and mammals in terrestrial ecosystem and molluscs in aquatic ecosystem.

The consumers that feed on these herbivores are carnivores, or more correctly **primary carnivores** (though secondary consumers). Those animals that depend on the primary carnivores for food are labelled **secondary carnivores.** A simple grazing food chain (GFC) is depicted below:

Grass ⇢ Goat ⇢ Man ⇢

(Producer) (Primary Consumer) (Secondary consumer)

The **detritus food chain** (DFC) begins with dead organic matter. It is made up of **decomposers** which are heterotrophic organisms, mainly fungi and bacteria. They meet their energy and nutrient requirements by degrading dead organic matter or detritus. These are also known as **saprotrophs** (*sapro:* to decompose). Decomposers secrete digestive enzymes that breakdown dead and waste materials into simple, inorganic materials, which are subsequently absorbed by them.

In an aquatic ecosystem, GFC is the major conduit for energy flow. As against this, in a terrestrial ecosystem, a much larger fraction of energy flows through the detritus food chain than through the GFC. Detritus food chain may be connected with the grazing food chain at some levels: some of the organisms of DFC are prey to the GFC animals, and in a natural ecosystem, some animals like cockroaches, crows, etc., are omnivores. These natural interconnection of food chains make it a **food web**. *How would you classify human beings!*

Organisms occupy a place in the natural surroundings or in a community according to their feeding relationship with other organisms. Based on the source of their nutrition or food, organisms occupy a specific place in the food chain that is known as their **trophic level**. Producers belong to the first trophic level, herbivores (primary consumer) to the second and carnivores (secondary consumer) to the third (Figure 14.2).

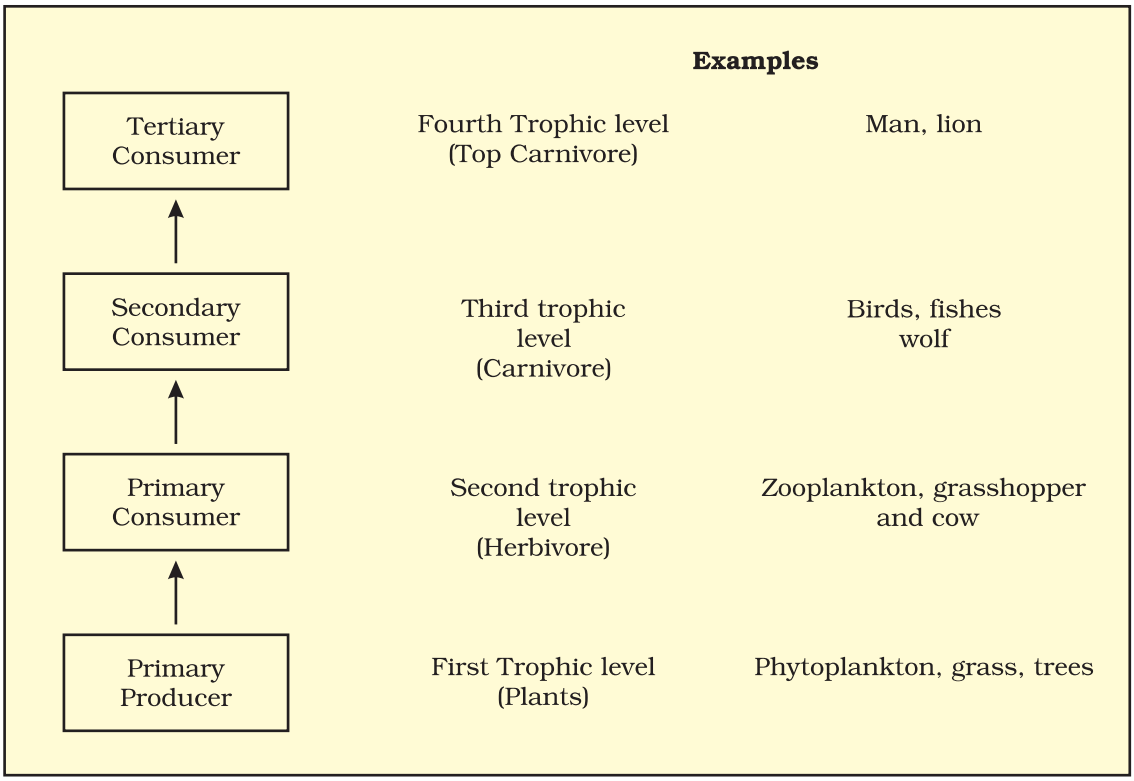


Figure 14.2 Diagrammatic representation of trophic levels in an ecosystem

The important point to note is that the amount of energy decreases at successive trophic levels. When any organism dies it is converted to detritus or dead biomass that serves as an energy source for decomposers. Organisms at each trophic level depend on those at the lower trophic level for their energy demands.

Each trophic level has a certain mass of living material at a particular time called as the **standing crop**. The standing crop is measured as the mass of living organisms (**biomass)** or the number in a unit area. The biomass of a species is expressed in terms of fresh or dry weight. Measurement of biomass in terms of dry weight is more accurate. *Why?*

The number of trophic levels in the grazing food chain is restricted as the transfer of energy follows 10 per cent law – only 10 per cent of the energy is transferred to each trophic level from the lower trophic level. In nature, it is possible to have so many levels – producer, herbivore, primary carnivore, secondary carnivore in the grazing food chain (Figure 14.3) . *Do you think there is any such limitation in a detritus food chain?*

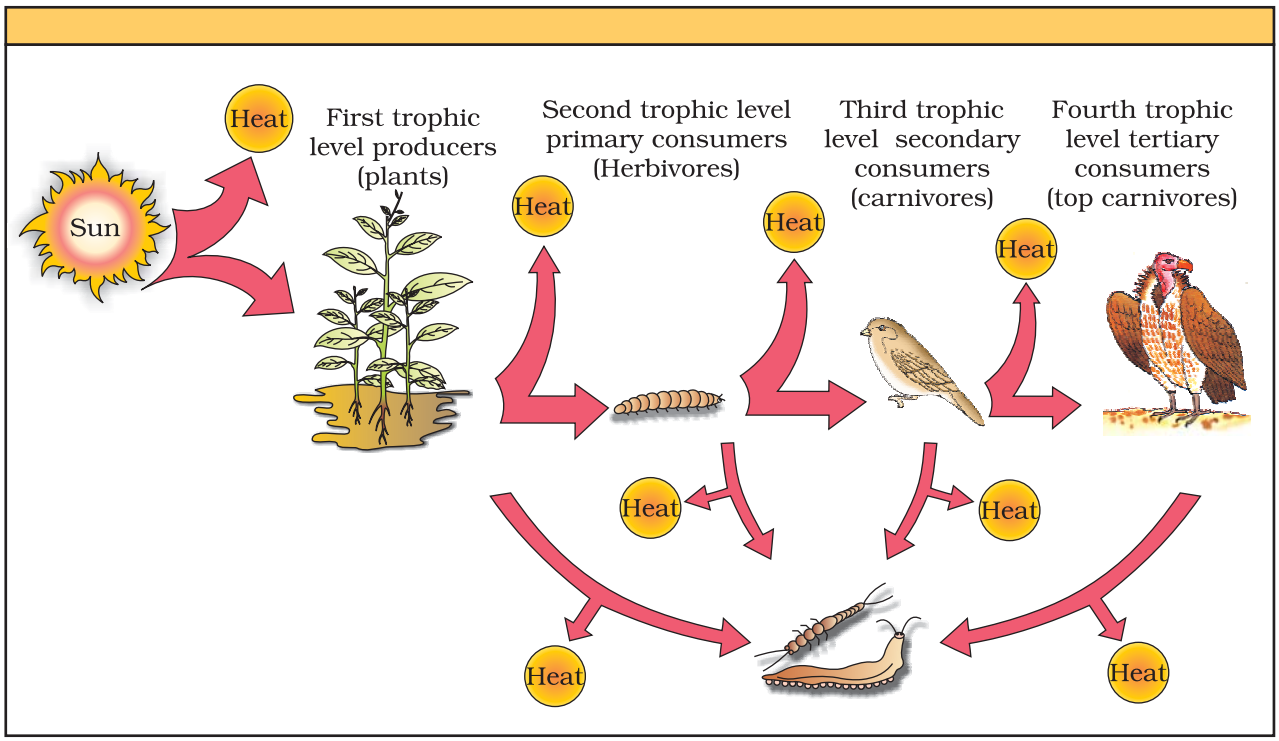


Figure 14.3 Energy flow through different trophic levels

14.5 Ecological Pyramids

You must be familiar with the shape of a pyramid. The base of a pyramid is broad and it narrows down at the apex. One gets a similar shape, whether you express the food or energy relationship between organisms

at different trophic level. Thus, relationship is expressed in terms of number, biomass or energy. The base of each pyramid represents the producers or the first trophic level while the apex represents tertiary or top level consumer. The three ecological pyramids that are usually studied are (a) pyramid of number; (b) pyramid of biomass and (c) pyramid of energy. For detail (see Figure 14.4 a, b, c and d).

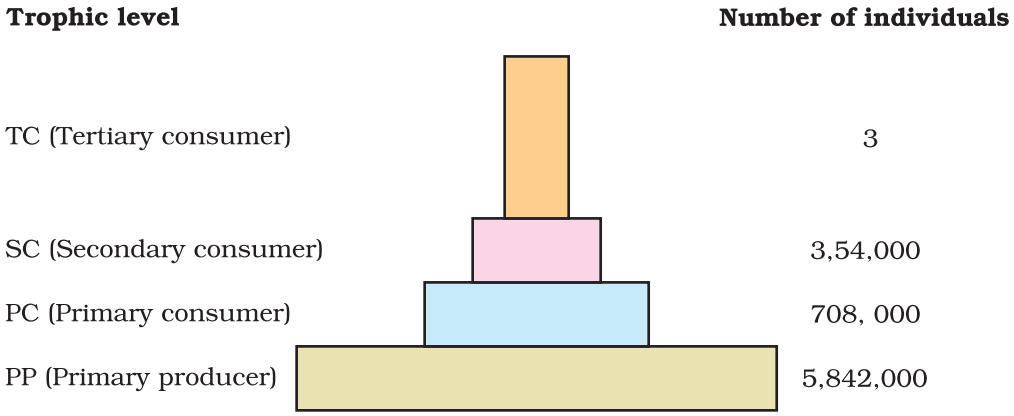


Figure 14.4 (a) Pyramid of numbers in a grassland ecosystem. Only three top-carnivores are supported in an ecosystem based on production of nearly 6 millions plants

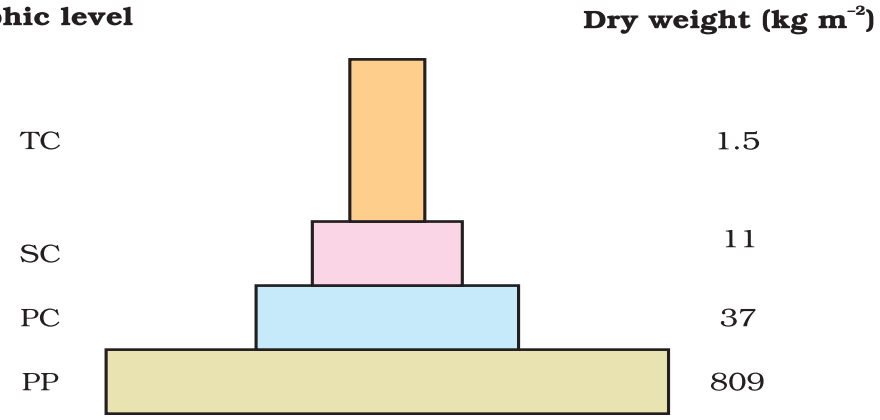


Figure 14.4 (b) Pyramid of biomass shows a sharp decrease in biomass at higher trophic levels

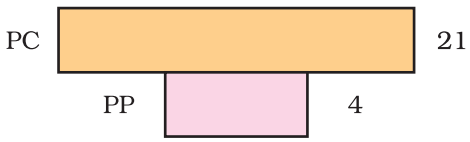


Figure 14.4 (c) Inverted pyramid of biomass-small standing crop of phytoplankton supports large standing crop of zooplankton

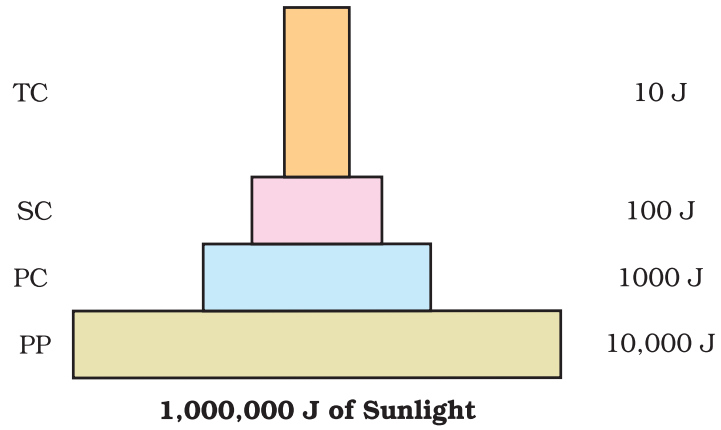


Figure 14.4 (d) An ideal pyramid of energy. Observe that primary producers convert only 1% of the energy in the sunlight available to them into NPP

Any calculations of energy content, biomass, or numbers has to include all organisms at that trophic level. No generalisations we make will be true if we take only a few individuals at any trophic level into account. Also a given organism may occupy more than one trophic level simultaneously. One must remember that the trophic level represents a functional level, not a species as such. A given species may occupy more than one trophic level in the same ecosystem at the same time; for example, a sparrow is a primary consumer when it eats seeds, fruits, peas, and a secondary consumer when it eats insects and worms. *Can you work out how many trophic levels human beings function at in a food chain?*

In most ecosystems, all the pyramids, of number, of energy and biomass are upright, i.e., producers are more in number and biomass than the herbivores, and herbivores are more in number and biomass than the carnivores. Also energy at a lower trophic level is always more than at a higher level.

There are exceptions to this generalisation: If you were to count the number of insects feeding on a big tree what kind of pyramid would you get? Now add an estimate of the number of small birds depending on the insects, as also the number of larger birds eating the smaller. Draw the shape you would get.

The pyramid of biomass in sea is also generally inverted because the biomass of fishes far exceeds that of phytoplankton. *Isn't that a paradox? How would you explain this?*

Pyramid of energy is always upright, can never be inverted, because when energy flows from a particular trophic level to the next trophic level, some energy is always lost as heat at each step. Each bar in the energy pyramid indicates the amount of energy present at each trophic level in a given time or annually per unit area.

However, there are certain limitations of ecological pyramids such as it does not take into account the same species belonging to two or more trophic levels. It assumes a simple food chain, something that almost never exists in nature; it does not accommodate a food web. Moreover, saprophytes are not given any place in ecological pyramids even though they play a vital role in the ecosystem.

14.6 Ecological Succession

You have learnt in Chapter 13, the characteristics of population and community and also their response to environment and how such responses vary from an individual response. Let us examine another aspect of community response to environment over time.

An important characteristic of all communities is that composition and structure constantly change in response to the changing environmental conditions. This change is orderly and sequential, parallel with the changes in the physical environment. These changes lead finally to a community that is in near equilibrium with the environment and that is called a **climax community**. The gradual and fairly predictable change in the species composition of a given area is called **ecological succession**. During succession some species colonise an area and their populations become more numerous, whereas populations of other species decline and even disappear.

The entire sequence of communities that successively change in a given area are called sere(s). The individual transitional communities are termed seral stages or seral communities. In the successive seral stages there is a change in the diversity of species of organisms, increase in the number of species and organisms as well as an increase in the total biomass.

The present day communities in the world have come to be because of succession that has occurred over millions of years since life started on earth. Actually succession and evolution would have been parallel processes at that time.

Succession is hence a process that starts where no living organisms are there – these could be areas where no living organisms ever existed, say bare rock; or in areas that somehow, lost all the living organisms that existed there. The former is called primary succession, while the latter is termed secondary succession.

Examples of areas where primary succession occurs are newly cooled lava, bare rock, newly created pond or reservoir. The establishment of a new biotic community is generally slow. Before a biotic community of diverse organisms can become established, there must be soil. Depending mostly on the climate, it takes natural processes several hundred to several thousand years to produce fertile soil on bare rock.

Secondary succession begins in areas where natural biotic communities have been destroyed such as in abandoned farm lands, burned or cut forests, lands that have been flooded. Since some soil or sediment is present, succession is faster than primary succession.

Description of ecological succession usually focuses on changes in vegetation. However, these vegetational changes in turn affect food and shelter for various types of animals. Thus, as succession proceeds, the numbers and types of animals and decomposers also change.

At any time during primary or secondary succession, natural or human induced disturbances (fire, deforestation, etc.), can convert a particular seral stage of succession to an earlier stage. Also such disturbances create new conditions that encourage some species and discourage or eliminate other species.

14.6.1 Succession of Plants

Based on the nature of the habitat – whether it is water (or very wet areas) or it is on very dry areas – succession of plants is called hydrach or xerarch, respectively. **Hydrarch succession** takes place in wetter areas and the successional series progress from hydric to the mesic conditions. As against this, **xerarch succession** takes place in dry areas and the series progress from xeric to mesic conditions. Hence, both hydrarch and xerach successions lead to medium water conditions (mesic) – neither too dry (xeric) nor too wet (hydric).

The species that invade a bare area are called **pioneer species**. In primary succession on rocks these are usually lichens which are able to secrete acids to dissolve rock, helping in weathering and soil formation. These later pave way to some very small plants like bryophytes, which are able to take hold in the small amount of soil. They are, with time, succeeded by bigger plants, and after several more stages, ultimately a stable climax forest community is formed. The climax community remains stable as long as the environment remains unchanged. With time the xerophytic habitat gets converted into a mesophytic one.

In primary succession in water, the pioneers are the small phytoplanktons, they are replaced with time by free-floating angiosperms, then by rooted hydrophytes, sedges, grasses and finally the trees. The climax again would be a forest. With time the water body is converted into land (Figure 14.5).

In secondary succession the species that invade depend on the condition of the soil, availability of water, the environment as also the seeds or other propagules present. Since soil is already there, the rate of succession is much faster and hence, climax is also reached more quickly.

What is important to understand is that succession, particularly primary succession, is a very slow process, taking maybe thousands of

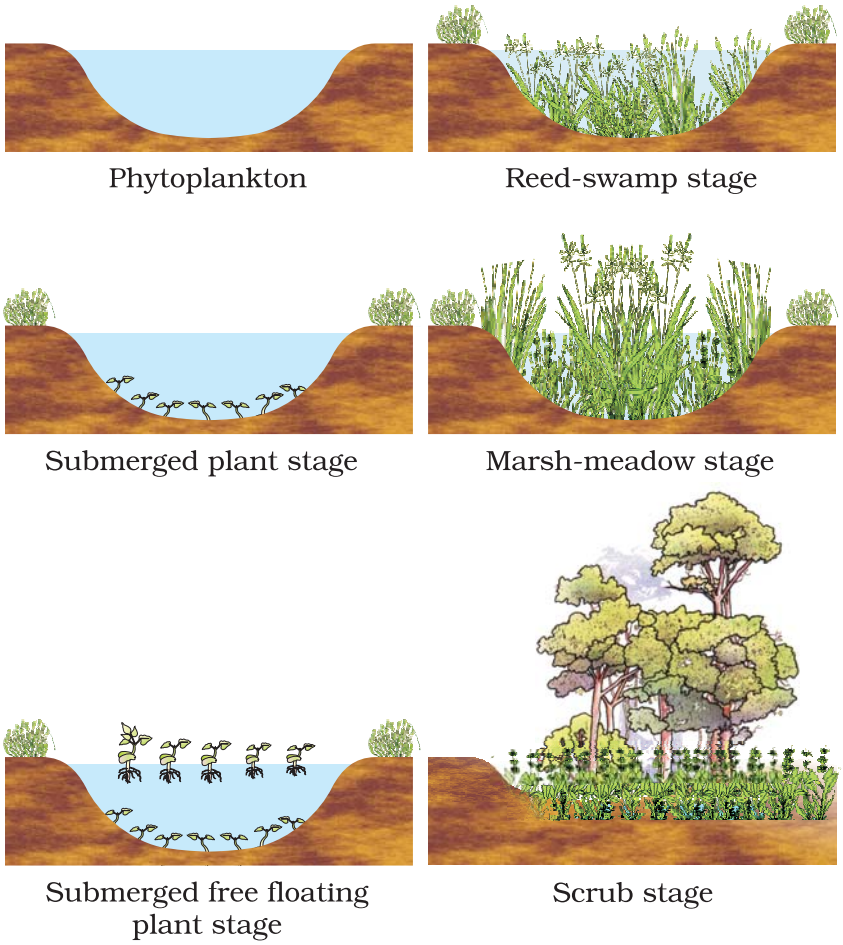


Figure 14.5 Diagramatic representation of primary succession

years for the climax to be reached. Another important fact is to understand that all succession whether taking place in water or on land, proceeds to a similar climax community – the mesic.

14.7 Nutrient Cycling

You have studied in Class XI that organisms need a constant supply of nutrients to grow, reproduce and regulate various body functions. The amount of nutrients, such as carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus, calcium, etc., present in the soil at any given time, is referred to as the **standing state**. It varies in different kinds of ecosystems and also on a seasonal basis.

What is important is to appreciate that nutrients which are never lost from the ecosystems, they are recycled time and again indefinitely. The movement of nutrient elements through the various components of an ecosystem is called **nutrient cycling**. Another name of nutrient cycling is **biogeochemical** cycles (bio: living organism, geo: rocks, air, water). Nutrient cycles are of two types: (a) **gaseous** and (b) **sedimentary.** The

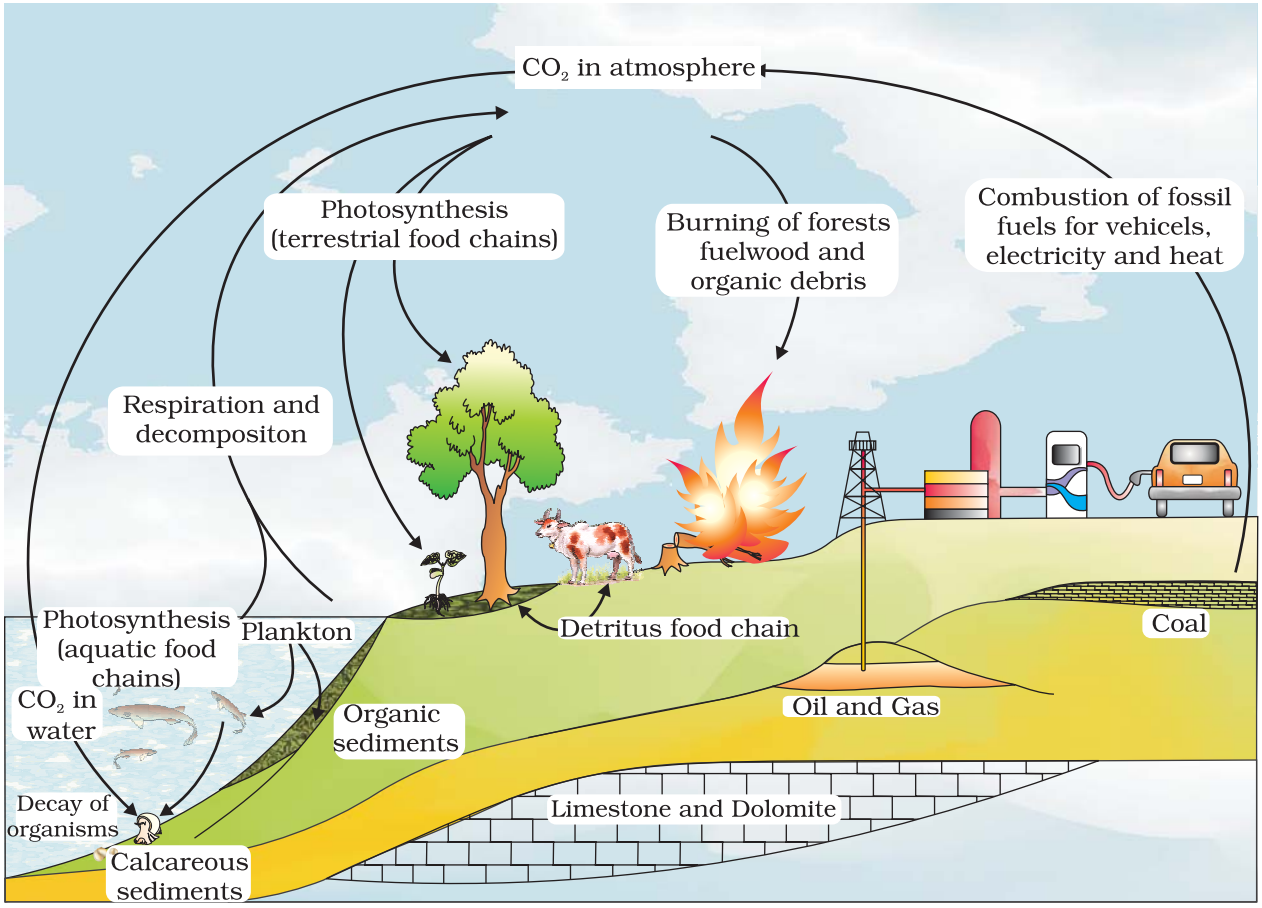


Figure 14.6 Simplified model of carbon cycle in the biosphere

reservoir for gaseous type of nutrient cycle (e.g., nitrogen, carbon cycle) exists in the atmosphere and for the sedimentary cycle (e.g., sulphur and phosphorus cycle), the reservoir is located in Earth's crust. Environmental factors, e.g., soil, moisture, pH, temperaturer etc., regulate the rate of release of nutrients into the atmosphere. The function of the reservoir is

to meet with the deficit which occurs due to imbalance in the rate of influx and efflux.

You have made a detailed study of nitrogen cycle in class XI. Here we discuss carbon and phosphorus cycles.

14.7.1 Ecosystem – Carbon Cycle

When you study the composition of living organisms, carbon constitutes 49 per cent of dry weight of organisms and is next only to water. If we look at the total quantity of global carbon, we find that 71 per cent carbon is found dissolved in oceans. This oceanic reservoir regulates the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere (Figure 14.6). *Do you know that the atmosphere only contains about 1per cent of total global carbon?*

Fossil fuel also represent a reservoir of carbon. Carbon cycling occurs through atmosphere, ocean and through living and dead organisms. According to one estimate 4×10^{13} kg of carbon is fixed in the biosphere through photosynthesis annually. A considerable amount of carbon returns to the atmosphere as CO_2 through respiratory activities of the producers and consumers. Decomposers also contribute substantially to CO_2 pool by their processing of waste materials and dead organic matter of land or oceans. Some amount of the fixed carbon is lost to sediments and removed from circulation. Burning of wood, forest fire and combustion of organic matter, fossil fuel, volcanic activity are additional sources for releasing CO_2 in the atmosphere.

Human activities have significantly influenced the carbon cycle. Rapid deforestation and massive burning of fossil fuel for energy and transport have significantly increased the rate of release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere (see greenhouse effect in Chapter 16).

14.7.2 Ecosystem – Phosphorus Cycle

Phosphorus is a major constituent of biological membranes, nucleic acids and cellular energy transfer systems. Many animals also need large quantities of this element to make shells, bones and teeth. The natural reservoir of phosphorus is rock, which contains phosphorus in the form of phosphates. When rocks are weathered, minute amounts of these phosphates dissolve in soil solution and are absorbed by the roots of the plants (Figure 14.7). Herbivores and other animals obtain this element from plants. The waste products and the dead organisms are decomposed by phosphate-solubilising bacteria releasing phosphorus. Unlike carbon cycle, there is no respiratory release of phosphorus into atmosphere. *Can you differentiate between the carbon and the phosphorus cycle?*

The other two major and important differences between carbon and phosphorus cycle are firstly, atmospheric inputs of phosphorus through rainfall are much smaller than carbon inputs, and, secondly, gaseous

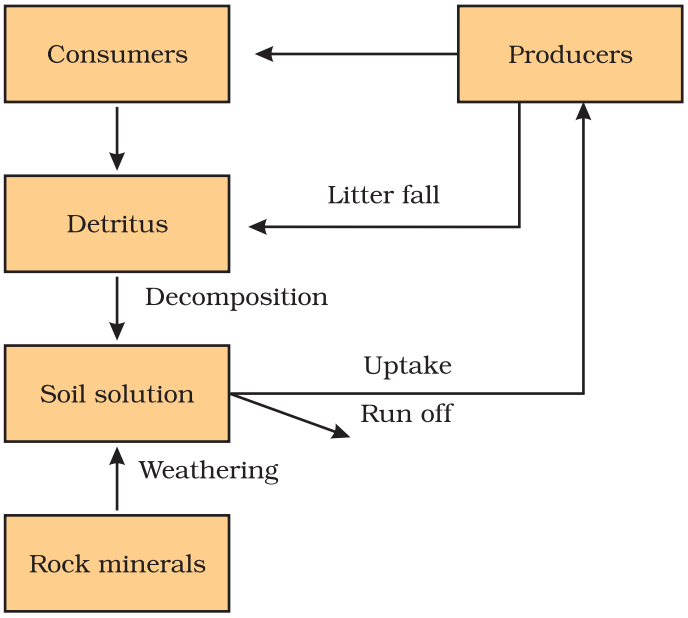


Figure 14.7 A simplified model of phosphorus cycling in a terrestrial ecosystem

exchanges of phosphorus between organism and environment are negligible.

14.8 Ecosystem Services

Healthy ecosystems are the base for a wide range of economic, environmental and aesthetic goods and services. The products of ecosystem processes are named as **ecosystem services**, for example, healthy forest ecosystems purify air and water, mitigate droughts and floods, cycle nutrients, generate fertile soils, provide wildlife habitat, maintain biodiversity, pollinate crops, provide storage site for carbon and also provide aesthetic, cultural and spiritual values. Though value of such services of biodiversity is difficult to determine, it seems reasonable to think that biodiversity should carry a hefty price tag.

Robert Constanza and his colleagues have very recently tried to put price tags on nature's life-support services. Researchers have put an average price tag of US $ 33 trillion a year on these fundamental ecosystems services, which are largely taken for granted because they are free. This is nearly twice the value of the global gross national product GNP which is (US $ 18 trillion).

Out of the total cost of various ecosystem services, the soil formation accounts for about 50 per cent, and contributions of other services like recreation and nutrient cycling, are less than 10 per cent each. The cost of climate regulation and habitat for wildlife are about 6 per cent each.

SUMMARY

An ecosystem is a functional unit of nature and comprises abiotic and biotic components. Abiotic components are inorganic materials- air, water and soil, whereas biotic components are producers, consumers and decomposers. Each ecosystem has characteristic physical structure resulting from interaction amongst abiotic and biotic components. Species composition and stratification are the two main structural features of an ecosystem. Based on source of nutrition every organism occupies a place in an ecosystem.

Productivity, decomposition, energy flow, and nutrient cycling are the four important components of an ecosystem. Primary productivity is the rate of capture of solar energy or biomass production of the producers. It is divided into two types: gross primary productivity (GPP) and net primary productivity (NPP). Rate of capture of solar energy or total production of organic matter is called as GPP. NPP is the remaining biomass or the energy left after utilisation of producers. Secondary productivity is the rate of assimilation of food energy by the consumers. In decomposition, complex organic compounds of detritus are converted to carbon dioxide, water and inorganic nutrients by the decomposers. Decomposition involves three processes, namely fragmentation of detritus, leaching and catabolism.

Energy flow is unidirectional. First, plants capture solar energy and then, food is transferred from the producers to decomposers. Organisms of different trophic levels in nature are connected to each other for food or energy relationship forming a food chain. The storage and movement of nutrient elements through the various components of the ecosystem is called nutrient cycling; nutrients are repeatedly used through this process. Nutrient cycling is of two types. gaseous and sedimentary. Atmosphere or hydrosphere is the reservoir for the gaseous type of cycle (carbon), whereas Earth's crust is the reservoir for sedimentary type (phosphorus). Products of ecosystem processes are named as ecosystem services, e.g., purification of air and water by forests.

The biotic community is dynamic and undergoes changes with the passage of time. These changes are sequentially ordered and constitute ecological succession. Succession begins with invasion of a bare lifeless area by pioneers which later pave way for successors and ultimately a stable climax community is formed. The climax community remains stable as long as the environment remains unchanged.

EXERCISES

1. Fill in the blanks.
   (a) Plants are called as_____because they fix carbon dioxide.
   (b) In an ecosystem dominated by trees, the pyramid (of numbers) is_____type.
   (c) In aquatic ecosystems, the limiting factor for the productivity is_____.

(d) Common detritivores in our ecosystem are_____.
(e) The major reservoir of carbon on earth is_____.

2. Which one of the following has the largest population in a food chain?
   (a) Producers
   (b) Primary consumers
   (c) Secondary consumers
   (d) Decomposers
3. The second trophic level in a lake is-
   (a) Phytoplankton
   (b) Zooplankton
   (c) Benthos
   (d) Fishes
4. Secondary producers are
   (a) Herbivores
   (b) Producers
   (c) Carnivores
   (d) None of the above
5. What is the percentage of photosynthetically active radiation (PAR), in the incident solar radiation.
   (a) 100%
   (b) 50 %
   (c) 1-5%
   (d) 2-10%
6. Distinguish between
   (a) Grazing food chain and detritus food chain
   (b) Production and decomposition
   (c) Upright and inverted pyramid
   (d) Food chain and Food web
   (e) Litter and detritus
   (f) Primary and secondary productivity
7. Describe the components of an ecosystem.
8. Define ecological pyramids and describe with examples, pyramids of number and biomass.
9. What is primary productivity? Give brief description of factors that affect primary productivity.
10. Define decomposition and describe the processes and products of decomposition.
11. Give an account of energy flow in an ecosystem.
12. Write important features of a sedimentary cycle in an ecosystem.
13. Outline salient features of carbon cycling in an ecosystem.

CHAPTER 15

BIODIVERSITY AND CONSERVATION

If an alien from a distant galaxy were to visit our planet Earth, the first thing that would amaze and baffle him would most probably be the enormous diversity of life that he would encounter. Even for humans, the rich variety of living organisms with which they share this planet never ceases to astonish and fascinate us. The common man would find it hard to believe that there are more than 20,000 species of ants, 3,00,000 species of beetles, 28,000 species of fishes and nearly 20,000 species of orchids. Ecologists and evolutionary biologists have been trying to understand the significance of such diversity by asking important questions– *Why are there so many species? Did such great diversity exist throughout earth's history? How did this diversification come about? How and why is this diversity important to the biosphere? Would it function any differently if the diversity was much less? How do humans benefit from the diversity of life?*

15.1 Biodiversity

In our biosphere immense diversity (or heterogeneity) exists not only at the species level but at all levels of biological organisation ranging from macromolecules within cells to biomes. Biodiversity is the term popularised by the sociobiologist Edward Wilson to describe the

combined diversity at all the levels of biological organisation.
The most important of them are–

(i) ***Genetic diversity***: A single species might show high diversity at the genetic level over its distributional range. The genetic variation shown by the medicinal plant *Rauwolfia vomitoria* growing in different Himalayan ranges might be in terms of the potency and concentration of the active chemical (reserpine) that the plant produces. India has more than 50,000 genetically different strains of rice, and 1,000 varieties of mango.

(ii) ***Species diversity***: The diversity at the species level. For example, the Western Ghats have a greater amphibian species diversity than the Eastern Ghats.

(iii) ***Ecological diversity***: At the ecosystem level, India, for instance, with its deserts, rain forests, mangroves, coral reefs, wetlands, estuaries, and alpine meadows has a greater ecosystem diversity than a Scandinavian country like Norway.

It has taken millions of years of evolution, to accumulate this rich diversity in nature, but we could lose all that wealth in less than two centuries if the present rates of species losses continue. Biodiversity and its conservation are now vital environmental issues of international concern as more and more people around the world begin to realise the critical importance of biodiversity for our survival and well- being on this planet.

15.1.1 How Many Species are there on Earth and How Many in India?

Since there are published records of all the species discovered and named, we know how many species in all have been recorded so far, but it is not easy to answer the question of how many species there are on earth. According to the IUCN (2004), the total number of plant and animal species described so far is slightly more than 1.5 million, but we have no clear idea of how many species are yet to be discovered and described. Estimates vary widely and many of them are only educated guesses. For many taxonomic groups, species inventories are more complete in temperate than in tropical countries. Considering that an overwhelmingly large proportion of the species waiting to be discovered are in the tropics, biologists make a statistical comparison of the temperate-tropical species richness of an exhaustively studied group of insects and extrapolate this ratio to other groups of animals and plants to come up with a gross estimate of the total number of species on earth. Some extreme estimates range from 20 to 50 million, but a more conservative and scientifically sound estimate made by Robert May places the global species diversity at about 7 million.

Let us look at some interesting aspects about earth's biodiversity based on the currently available species inventories. More than 70 per cent of all the species recorded are animals, while plants (including algae, fungi, bryophytes, gymnosperms and angiosperms) comprise no more than 22 per cent of the total. Among animals, insects are the most species-rich taxonomic group, making up more than 70 per cent of the total. That means, out of every 10 animals on this planet, 7 are insects. Again, how do we explain this enormous diversification of insects? The number of fungi species in the world is more than the combined total of the species of fishes, amphibians, reptiles and mammals. In Figure 15.1, biodiversity is depicted showing species number of major taxa.

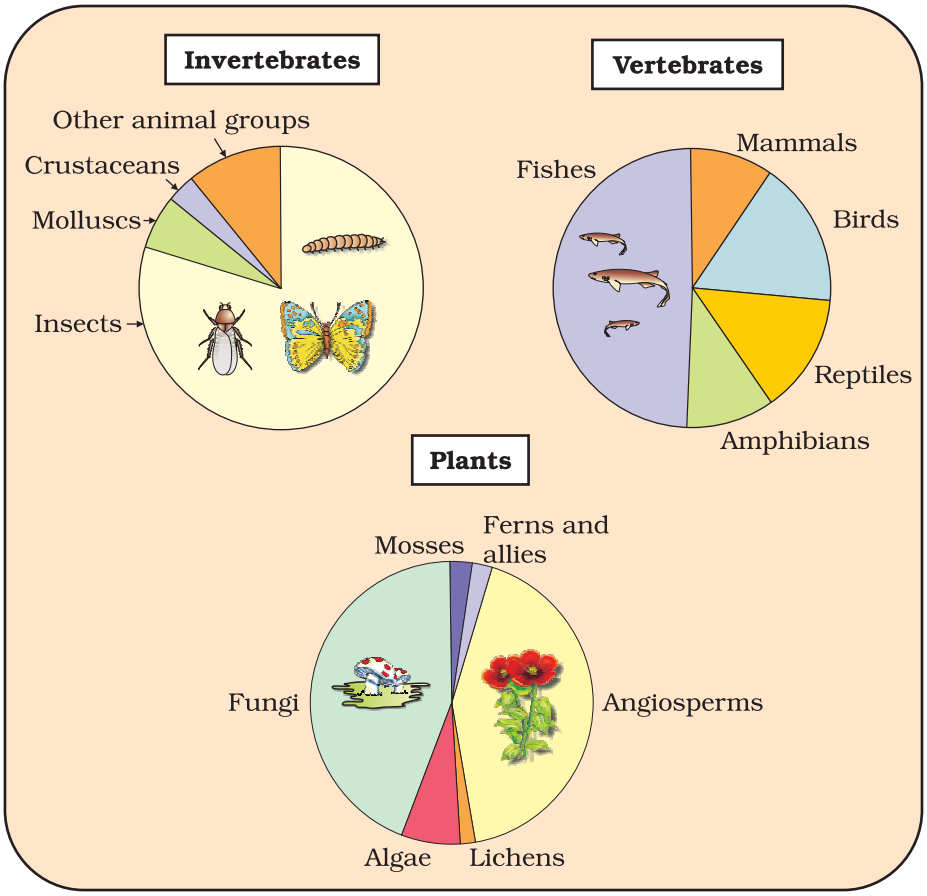


Figure 15.1 Representing global biodiversity: proportionate number of species of major taxa of plants, invertebrates and vertebrates

It should be noted that these estimates do not give any figures for prokaryotes. Biologists are not sure about how many prokaryotic species there might be. The problem is that conventional taxonomic methods are not suitable for identifying microbial species and many species are simply not culturable under laboratory conditions. If we accept biochemical or molecular criteria for delineating species for this group, then their diversity alone might run into millions.

Although India has only 2.4 per cent of the world's land area, its share of the global species diversity is an impressive 8.1 per cent. That is what makes our country one of the 12 mega diversity countries of the world. Nearly 45,000 species of plants and twice as many of animals have been recorded from India. How many living species are actually there waiting to be discovered and named? If we accept May's global estimates, only 22 per cent of the total species have been recorded so far. Applying this proportion to India's diversity figures, we estimate that there are probably more than 1,00,000 plant species and more than 3,00, 000 animal species yet to be discovered and described. Would we ever be able to complete the inventory of the biological wealth of our country? Consider the immense trained manpower (taxonomists) and the time required to complete the job. The situation appears more hopeless when we realise that a large fraction of these species faces the threat of becoming extinct even before we discover them. Nature's biological library is burning even before we catalogued the titles of all the books stocked there.

15.1.2 Patterns of Biodiversity

(i) ***Latitudinal gradients***: The diversity of plants and animals is not uniform throughout the world but shows a rather uneven distribution. For many group of animals or plants, there are interesting patterns in diversity, the most well- known being the latitudinal gradient in diversity. In general, species diversity decreases as we move away from the equator towards the poles. With very few exceptions, tropics (latitudinal range of 23.5° N to 23.5° S) harbour more species than temperate or polar areas. Colombia located near the equator has nearly 1,400 species of birds while New York at 41° N has 105 species and Greenland at 71° N only 56 species. India, with much of its land area in the tropical latitudes, has more than 1,200 species of birds. A forest in a tropical region like Equador has up to 10 times as many species of vascular plants as a forest of equal area in a temperate region like the Midwest of the USA. The largely tropical Amazonian rain forest in South America has the greatest biodiversity on earth- it is home to more than 40,000 species of plants, 3,000 of fishes, 1,300 of birds, 427 of mammals, 427 of amphibians, 378 of reptiles and of more than 1,25,000 invertebrates. Scientists estimate that in these rain forests there might be at least two million insect species waiting to be discovered and named.

What is so special about tropics that might account for their greater biological diversity? Ecologists and evolutionary biologists have proposed various hypotheses; some important ones are (a) Speciation is generally a function of time, unlike temperate regions subjected to frequent glaciations in the past, tropical latitudes have remained relatively undisturbed for millions of years and thus, had a long

evolutionary time for species diversification, (b) Tropical environments, unlike temperate ones, are less seasonal, relatively more constant and predictable. Such constant environments promote niche specialisation and lead to a greater species diversity and (c) There is more solar energy available in the tropics, which contributes to higher productivity; this in turn might contribute indirectly to greater diversity.

(ii) ***Species-Area relationships*** *:* During his pioneering and extensive explorations in the wilderness of South American jungles, the great German naturalist and geographer Alexander von Humboldt observed that within a region species richness increased with increasing explored area, but only up to a limit. In fact, the relation between species richness and area for a wide variety of taxa (angiosperm plants, birds, bats, freshwater fishes) turns out to be a rectangular hyperbola (Figure15.2). On a logarithmic scale, the relationship is a straight line described by the equation

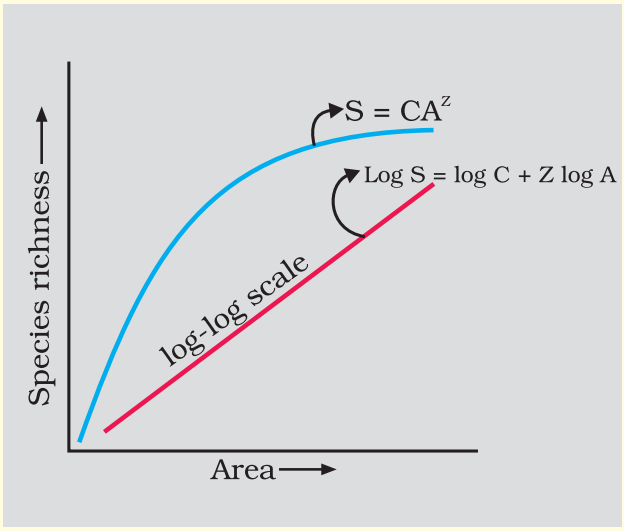


Figure 15.2 Showing species area relationship. Note that on log scale the relationship becomes linear

log S = log C + Z log A

where

S= Species richness A= Area

Z = slope of the line (regression coefficient)

C = Y-intercept

Ecologists have discovered that the value of Z lies in the range of 0.1 to 0.2, regardless of the taxonomic group or the region (whether it is the plants in Britain, birds in California or molluscs in New York state, the slopes of the regression line are amazingly similar). But, if you analyse the species-area relationships among very large areas like the entire continents, you will find that the slope of the line to be much steeper (Z values in the range of 0.6 to 1.2). For example, for frugivorous (fruit-eating) birds and mammals in the tropical forests of different continents, the slope is found to be 1.15. *What do steeper slopes mean in this context?*

15.1.3 The importance of Species Diversity to the Ecosystem

Does the number of species in a community really matter to the functioning of the ecosystem?This is a question for which ecologists have not been able to give a definitive answer. For many decades, ecologists believed that communities with more species, generally, tend to be more stable than those with less species. What exactly is stability for a biological

community? A stable community should not show too much variation in productivity from year to year; it must be either resistant or resilient to occasional disturbances (natural or man-made), and it must also be resistant to invasions by alien species. We don't know how these attributes are linked to species richness in a community, but David Tilman's long-term ecosystem experiments using outdoor plots provide some tentative answers. Tilman found that plots with more species showed less year-to-year variation in total biomass. He also showed that in his experiments, increased diversity contributed to higher productivity.

Although, we may not understand completely how species richness contributes to the well-being of an ecosystem, we know enough to realise that rich biodiversity is not only essential for ecosystem health but imperative for the very survival of the human race on this planet. At a time when we are losing species at an alarming pace, one might ask– Does it really matter to us if a few species become extinct? Would Western Ghats ecosystems be less functional if one of its tree frog species is lost forever? How is our quality of life affected if, say, instead of 20,000 we have only 15,000 species of ants on earth?

There are no direct answers to such näive questions but we can develop a proper perspective through an analogy (the 'rivet popper hypothesis') used by Stanford ecologist Paul Ehrlich. In an airplane (ecosystem) all parts are joined together using thousands of rivets (species). If every passenger travelling in it starts popping a rivet to take home (causing a species to become extinct), it may not affect flight safety (proper functioning of the ecosystem) initially, but as more and more rivets are removed, the plane becomes dangerously weak over a period of time. Furthermore, which rivet is removed may also be critical. Loss of rivets on the wings (key species that drive major ecosystem functions) is obviously a more serious threat to flight safety than loss of a few rivets on the seats or windows inside the plane.

15.1.4 Loss of Biodiversity

While it is doubtful if any new species are being added (through speciation) into the earth's treasury of species, there is no doubt about their continuing losses. The biological wealth of our planet has been declining rapidly and the accusing finger is clearly pointing to human activities. The colonisation of tropical Pacific Islands by humans is said to have led to the extinction of more than 2,000 species of native birds. The IUCN Red List (2004) documents the extinction of 784 species (including 338 vertebrates, 359 invertebrates and 87 plants) in the last 500 years. Some examples of recent extinctions include the dodo (Mauritius), quagga (Africa), thylacine (Australia), Steller's Sea Cow (Russia) and three subspecies (Bali, Javan, Caspian) of tiger. The last twenty years alone have witnessed the disappearance of 27 species. Careful analysis of records

shows that extinctions across taxa are not random; some groups like amphibians appear to be more vulnerable to extinction. Adding to the grim scenario of extinctions is the fact that more than 15,500 species world-wide are facing the threat of extinction. Presently, 12 per cent of all bird species, 23 per cent of all mammal species, 32 per cent of all amphibian species and 31per cent of all gymnosperm species in the world face the threat of extinction.

From a study of the history of life on earth through fossil records, we learn that large-scale loss of species like the one we are currently witnessing have also happened earlier, even before humans appeared on the scene. During the long period (> 3 billion years) since the origin and diversification of life on earth there were five episodes of mass extinction of species. How is the 'Sixth Extinction' presently in progress different from the previous episodes? The difference is in the rates; the current species extinction rates are estimated to be 100 to 1,000 times faster than in the pre-human times and our activities are responsible for the faster rates. Ecologists warn that if the present trends continue, nearly half of all the species on earth might be wiped out within the next 100 years.

In general, loss of biodiversity in a region may lead to (a) decline in plant production, (b) lowered resistance to environmental perturbations such as drought and (c) increased variability in certain ecosystem processes such as plant productivity, water use, and pest and disease cycles.

Causes of biodiversity losses: The accelerated rates of species extinctions that the world is facing now are largely due to human activities. There are four major causes (' The Evil Quartet ' is the sobriquet used to describe them).

(i) ***Habitat loss and fragmentation:*** This is the most important cause driving animals and plants to extinction. The most dramatic examples of habitat loss come from tropical rain forests. Once covering more than 14 per cent of the earth's land surface, these rain forests now cover no more than 6 per cent. They are being destroyed fast. By the time you finish reading this chapter, 1000 more hectares of rain forest would have been lost. The Amazon rain forest (it is so huge that it is called the 'lungs of the planet') harbouring probably millions of species is being cut and cleared for cultivating *soya beans* or for conversion to grasslands for raising beef cattle. Besides total loss, the degradation of many habitats by pollution also threatens the survival of many species. When large habitats are broken up into small fragments due to various human activities, mammals and birds requiring large territories and certain animals with migratory habits are badly affected, leading to population declines.

(ii) ***Over-exploitation:*** Humans have always depended on nature for food and shelter, but when 'need' turns to 'greed', it leads to

over-exploitation of natural resources. Many species extinctions in the last 500 years (Steller's sea cow, passenger pigeon) were due to overexploitation by humans. Presently many marine fish populations around the world are over harvested, endangering the continued existence of some commercially important species.

(iii) ***Alien species invasions***: When alien species are introduced unintentionally or deliberately for whatever purpose, some of them turn invasive, and cause decline or extinction of indigenous species. The Nile perch introduced into Lake Victoria in east Africa led eventually to the extinction of an ecologically unique assemblage of more than 200 species of cichlid fish in the lake. You must be familiar with the environmental damage caused and threat posed to our native species by invasive weed species like carrot grass (*Parthenium*), *Lantana* and water hyacinth (*Eicchornia*). The recent illegal introduction of the African catfish *Clarias gariepinus* for aquaculture purposes is posing a threat to the indigenous catfishes in our rivers.

(iv) ***Co-extinctions***: When a species becomes extinct, the plant and animal species associated with it in an obligatory way also become extinct. When a host fish species becomes extinct, its unique assemblage of parasites also meets the same fate. Another example is the case of a coevolved plant-pollinator mutualism where extinction of one invariably leads to the extinction of the other.

15.2 Biodiversity Conservation

15.2.1 Why Should We Conserve Biodiversity?

There are many reasons, some obvious and others not so obvious, but all equally important. They can be grouped into three categories: narrowly utilitarian, broadly utilitarian, and ethical.

The **narrowly utilitarian** arguments for conserving biodiversity are obvious; humans derive countless direct economic benefits from nature- food (cereals, pulses, fruits), firewood, fibre, construction material, industrial products (tannins, lubricants, dyes, resins, perfumes) and products of medicinal importance. More than 25 per cent of the drugs currently sold in the market worldwide are derived from plants and 25,000 species of plants contribute to the traditional medicines used by native peoples around the world. Nobody knows how many more medicinally useful plants there are in tropical rain forests waiting to be explored. With increasing resources put into 'bioprospecting' (exploring molecular, genetic and species-level diversity for products of economic importance), nations endowed with rich biodiversity can expect to reap enormous benefits.

The **broadly utilitarian** argument says that biodiversity plays a major role in many ecosystem services that nature provides. The fast-

dwindling Amazon forest is estimated to produce, through photosynthesis, 20 per cent of the total oxygen in the earth's atmosphere. Can we put an economic value on this service by nature? You can get some idea by finding out how much your neighborhood hospital spends on a cylinder of oxygen. Pollination (without which plants cannot give us fruits or seeds) is another service, ecosystems provide through pollinators layer – bees, bumblebees, birds and bats. *What will be the costs of accomplishing pollination without help from natural pollinators?* There are other intangible benefits – that we derive from nature–the aesthetic pleasures of walking through thick woods, watching spring flowers in full bloom or waking up to a bulbul's song in the morning. Can we put a price tag on such things?

The **ethical** argument for conserving biodiversity relates to what we owe to millions of plant, animal and microbe species with whom we share this planet. Philosophically or spiritually, we need to realise that every species has an intrinsic value, even if it may not be of current or any economic value to us. We have a moral duty to care for their well-being and pass on our biological legacy in good order to future generations.

15.2.2 How do we conserve Biodiversity?

When we conserve and protect the whole ecosystem, its biodiversity at all levels is protected - we save the entire forest to save the tiger. This approach is called *in situ* (on site) conservation. However, when there are situations where an animal or plant is endangered or threatened and needs urgent measures to save it from extinction, *ex situ* (off site) conservation is the desirable approach.

***In situ* conservation–** Faced with the conflict between development and conservation, many nations find it unrealistic and economically not feasible to conserve all their biological wealth. Invariably, the number of species waiting to be saved from extinction far exceeds the conservation resources available. On a global basis, this problem has been addressed by eminent conservationists. They identified for maximum protection certain 'biodiversity hotspots' regions with very high levels of species richness and high degree of **endemism** (that is, species confined to that region and not found anywhere else). Initially 25 biodiversity hotspots were identified but subsequently nine more have been added to the list, bringing the total number of biodiversity hotspots in the world to 34. These hotspots are also regions of accelerated habitat loss. Three of these hotspots – Western Ghats and Sri Lanka, Indo-Burma and Himalaya – cover our country's exceptionally high biodiversity regions. Although all the biodiversity hotspots put together cover less than 2 percent of the earth's land area, the number of species they collectively harbour is extremely high and strict protection of these hotspots could reduce the ongoing mass extinctions by almost 30 per cent.

In India, ecologically unique and biodiversity-rich regions are legally protected as biosphere reserves, national parks and sanctuaries. India now has 14 biosphere reserves, 90 national parks and 448 wildlife sanctuaries. India has also a history of religious and cultural traditions that emphasised protection of nature. In many cultures, tracts of forest were set aside, and all the trees and wildlife within were venerated and given total protection. Such **sacred groves** are found in Khasi and Jaintia Hills in Meghalaya, Aravalli Hills of Rajasthan, Western Ghat regions of Karnataka and Maharashtra and the Sarguja, Chanda and Bastar areas of Madhya Pradesh. In Meghalaya, the sacred groves are the last refuges for a large number of rare and threatened plants.

***Ex situ* Conservation–** In this approach, threatened animals and plants are taken out from their natural habitat and placed in special setting where they can be protected and given special care. Zoological parks, botanical gardens and wildlife safari parks serve this purpose. There are many animals that have become extinct in the wild but continue to be maintained in zoological parks. In recent years *ex situ* conservation has advanced beyond keeping threatened species in enclosures. Now gametes of threatened species can be preserved in viable and fertile condition for long periods using cryopreservation techniques, eggs can be fertilised *in vitro*, and plants can be propagated using tissue culture methods. Seeds of different genetic strains of commercially important plants can be kept for long periods in seed banks.

Biodiversity knows no political boundaries and its conservation is therefore a collective responsibility of all nations. The historic Convention on Biological Diversity ('The Earth Summit') held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, called upon all nations to take appropriate measures for conservation of biodiversity and sustainable utilisation of its benefits. In a follow-up, the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in 2002 in Johannesburg, South Africa, 190 countries pledged their commitment to achieve by 2010, a significant reduction in the current rate of biodiversity loss at global, regional and local levels.

SUMMARY

Since life originated on earth nearly 3.8 billion years ago, there had been enormous diversification of life forms on earth. Biodiversity refers to the sum total of diversity that exists at all levels of biological organisation. Of particular importance is the diversity at genetic, species and ecosystem levels and conservation efforts are aimed at protecting diversity at all these levels.

More than 1.5 million species have been recorded in the world, but there might still be nearly 6 million species on earth waiting to be discovered and named. Of the named species, > 70 per cent are animals, of which 70 per cent are insects. The group Fungi has more species

than all the vertebrate species combined. India, with about 45,000 species of plants and twice as many species of animals, is one of the 12 mega diversity countries of the world.

Species diversity on earth is not uniformly distributed but shows interesting patterns. It is generally highest in the tropics and decreases towards the poles. Important explanations for the species richness of the tropics are: Tropics had more evolutionary time; they provide a relatively constant environment and, they receive more solar energy which contributes to greater productivity. Species richness is also function of the area of a region; the species-area relationship is generally a rectangular hyperbolic function.

It is believed that communities with high diversity tend to be less variable, more productive and more resistant to biological invasions. Earth's fossil history reveals incidence of mass extinctions in the past, but the present rates of extinction, largely attributed to human activities, are 100 to 1000 times higher. Nearly 700 species have become extinct in recent times and more than 15,500 species (of which > 650 are from India currently face the threat of extinction. The causes of high extinction rates at present include habitat (particularly forests) loss and fragmentation, over-exploitation, biological invasions and co-extinctions.

Earth's rich biodiversity is vital for the very survival of mankind. The reasons for conserving biodiversity are narrowly utilitarian, broadly utilitarian and ethical. Besides the direct benefits (food, fibre, firewood, pharmaceuticals, etc.), there are many indirect benefits we receive through ecosystem services such as pollination, pest control, climate moderation and flood control. We also have a moral responsibility to take good care of earth's biodiversity and pass it on in good order to our next generation.

Biodiversity conservation may be *in situ* as well as *ex situ.* In *in situ* conservation, the endangered species are protected in their natural habitat so that the entire ecosystem is protected. Recently, 34 'biodiversity hotspots' in the world have been proposed for intensive conservation efforts. Of these, three (Western Ghats-Sri Lanka, Himalaya and Indo-Burma) cover India's rich biodiversity regions. Our country's *in situ* conservation efforts are reflected in its 14 biosphere reserves, 90 national parks, > 450 wildlife sanctuaries and many sacred groves. *Ex situ* conservation methods include protective maintenance of threatened species in zoological parks and botanical gardens, *in vitro* fertilisation, tissue culture propagation and cryopreservation of gametes.

EXERCISES

1. Name the three important components of biodiversity.
2. How do ecologists estimate the total number of species present in the world?

3. Give three hypotheses for explaining why tropics show greatest levels of species richness.
4. What is the significance of the slope of regression in a species – area relationship?
5. What are the major causes of species losses in a geographical region?
6. How is biodiversity important for ecosystem functioning?
7. What are sacred groves? What is their role in conservation?
8. Among the ecosystem services are control of floods and soil erosion. How is this achieved by the biotic components of the ecosystem?
9. The species diversity of plants (22 per cent) is much less than that of animals (72 per cent). What could be the explanations to how animals achieved greater diversification?
10. Can you think of a situation where we deliberately want to make a species extinct? How would you justify it?

CHAPTER 16

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Human population size has grown enormously over the last hundred years. This means increase in demand for food, water, home, electricity, roads, automobiles and numerous other commodities. These demands are exerting tremendous pressure on our natural resources, and are also contributing to pollution of air, water and soil. The need of the hour is to check the degradation and depletion of our precious natural resources and pollution without halting the process of development.

Pollution is any undesirable change in physical, chemical or biological characteristics of air, land, water or soil. Agents that bring about such an undesirable change are called as **pollutants.** In order to control environmental pollution, the Government of India has passed the **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986** to protect and improve the quality of our environment (air, water and soil).

16.1 Air Pollution and its Control

We are dependent on air for our respiratory needs. Air pollutants cause injury to all living organisms. They reduce growth and yield of crops and cause premature death of plants. Air pollutants also deleteriously affect the respiratory system of humans and of animals. Harmful

effects depend on the concentration of pollutants, duration of exposure and the organism.

Smokestacks of thermal power plants, smelters and other industries release particulate and gaseous air pollutants together with harmless gases, such as nitrogen, oxygen, etc. These pollutants must be separated/ filtered out before releasing the harmless gases into the atmosphere.

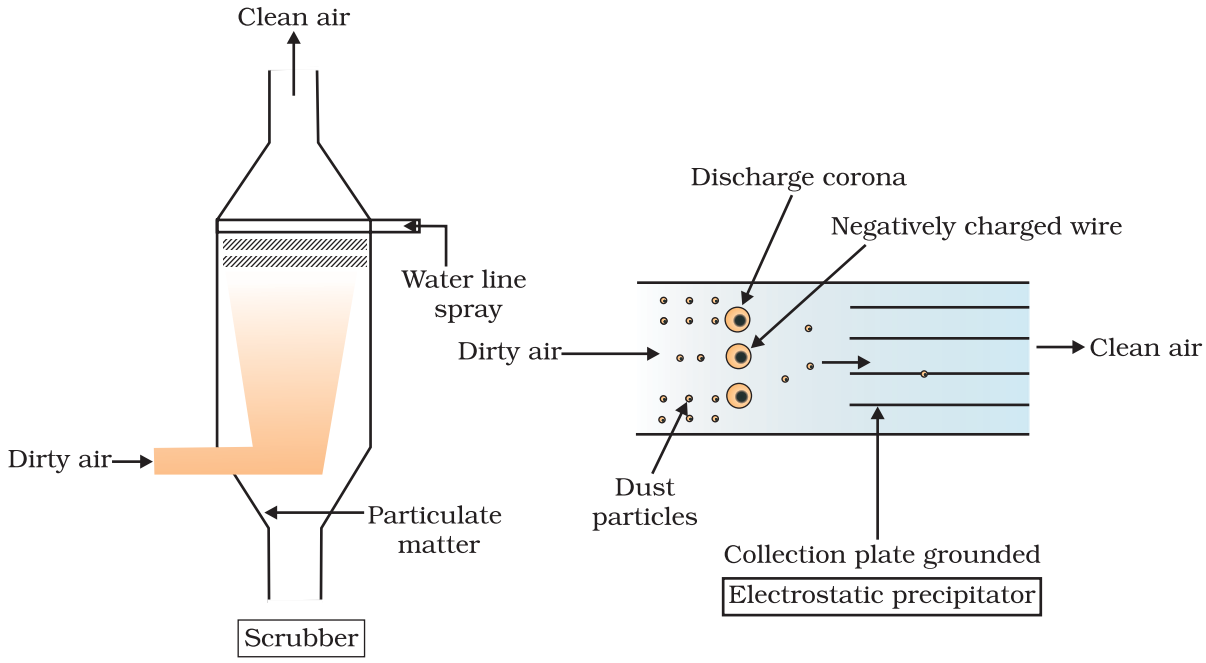


Figure 16.1 Electrostatic precipitator

There are several ways of removing particulate matter; the most widely used of which is the **electrostatic precipitator** (Figure 16.1), which can remove over 99 per cent particulate matter present in the exhaust from a thermal power plant. It has electrode wires that are maintained at several thousand volts, which produce a corona that releases electrons. These electrons attach to dust particles giving them a net negative charge. The collecting plates are grounded and attract the charged dust particles. The velocity of air between the plates must be low enough to allow the dust to fall. A scrubber (Figure 16.1) can remove gases like sulphur dioxide. In a scrubber, the exhaust is passed through a spray of water or lime. Recently we have realised the dangers of particulate matter that are very very small and are not removed by these precipitators. According to Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), particulate size 2.5 micrometers or less in diameter (PM 2.5) are responsible for causing the greatest harm to human health. These fine particulates can be inhaled deep into the lungs and can cause breathing and respiratory symptoms, irritation, inflammations and damage to the lungs and premature deaths.

Automobiles are a major cause for atmospheric pollution atleast in the metro cities. As the number of vehicles increase on the streets, this problem is now shifting to the other cities too. Proper maintenance of automobiles along with use of lead-free petrol or diesel can reduce the pollutants they emit. Catalytic converters, having expensive metals namely platinum-palladium and rhodium as the catalysts, are fitted into automobiles for reducing emission of poisonous gases. As the exhaust passes through the catalytic converter, unburnt hydrocarbons are converted into carbon dioxide and water, and carbon monoxide and nitric oxide are changed to carbon dioxide and nitrogen gas, respectively. Motor vehicles equipped with catalytic converter should use unleaded petrol because lead in the petrol inactivates the catalyst.

16.1.1 Controlling Vehicular Air Pollution: A Case Study of Delhi

With its very large population of vehicular traffic, Delhi leads the country in its levels of air-pollution – it has more cars than the states of Gujarat and West Bengal put together. In the 1990s, Delhi ranked fourth among the 41 most polluted cities of the world. Air pollution problems in Delhi became so serious that a public interest litigation (PIL) was filed in the Supreme Court of India. After being censured very strongly by the Supreme Court, under its directives, the government was asked to take, within a specified time period, appropriate measures, including switching over the entire fleet of public transport, i.e., buses, from diesel to **compressed natural gas** (**CNG**). All the buses of Delhi were converted to run on CNG by the end of 2002. You may ask the question as to why CNG is better than diesel. The answer is that CNG burns most efficiently, unlike petrol or diesel, in the automobiles and very little of it is left unburnt. Moreover, CNG is cheaper than petrol or diesel, cannot be siphoned off by thieves and adulterated like petrol or diesel. The main problem with switching over to CNG is the difficulty of laying down pipelines to deliver CNG through distribution points/pumps and ensuring uninterrupted supply. Simultaneously parallel steps taken in Delhi for reducing vehicular pollution include phasing out of old vehicles, use of unleaded petrol, use of low-sulphur petrol and diesel, use of catalytic converters in vehicles, application of stringent pollution-level norms for vehicles, etc.

The Government of India through a new auto fuel policy has laid out a roadmap to cut down vehicular pollution in Indian cities. More stringent norms for fuels means steadily reducing the sulphur and aromatics content in petrol and diesel fuels. Euro II norms, for example, stipulates that sulphur be controlled at 350 parts-per-million (ppm) in diesel and 150 ppm in petrol. Aromatic hydrocarbons are to be contained at 42 per cent of the concerned fuel. The goal, according to the roadmap, is to reduce sulphur to 50 ppm in petrol and diesel and bring down the

level to 35 per cent. Corresponding to the fuel, vehicle engines will also need to be upgraded. The Bharat Stage II (equivalent to Euro-II norms), which is currently in place in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Pune, Surat, Kanpur and Agra, will be applicable to all automobiles throughout the country from April 1, 2005. All automobiles and fuel-petrol and diesel – were to have met the Euro III emission specifications in these 11 cities from April 1, 2005 and have to meet the Euro-IV norms by April 1, 2010. The rest of the country will have Euro-III emission norm compliant automobiles and fuels by 2010.

Thanks to the efforts made, the air quality of Delhi has significantly improved. According to an estimate, a substantial fall in CO_2 and SO_2 level has been found in Delhi between 1997 and 2005.

In India, the **Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act** came into force in 1981, but was amended in 1987 to include noise as an air pollutant. **Noise** is undesired high level of sound. We have got used to associating loud sounds with pleasure and entertainment not realising that noise causes psychological and physiological disorders in humans. The bigger the city, the bigger the function, the greater the noise!! A brief exposure to extremely high sound level, 150 dB or more generated by take off of a jet plane or rocket, may damage ear drums thus permanently impairing hearing ability. Even chronic exposure to a relatively lower noise level of cities may permanently damage hearing abilities of humans. Noise also causes sleeplessness, increased heart beating, altered breathing pattern, thus considerably stressing humans.

Considering the many dangerous effects of noise pollution can you identify the unnecessary sources of noise pollution around you which can be reduced immediately without any financial loss to anybody? Reduction of noise in our industries can be affected by use of sound-absorbent materials or by muffling noise. Stringent following of laws laid down in relation to noise like delimitation of horn-free zones around hospitals and schools, permissible sound-levels of crackers and of loudspeakers, timings after which loudspeakers cannot be played, etc., need to be enforced to protect ourselves from noise pollution.

16.2 Water Pollution and its Control

Human beings have been abusing the water-bodies around the world by using them for disposal of all kinds of waste. We tend to believe that water can wash away everything not taking cognizance of the fact that the water bodies are our lifeline as well as that of all other living organisms. *Can you list what all we tend to try and wash away through our rivers and drains?* Due to such activities of human kind the ponds, lakes, stream, rivers, estuaries and oceans are becoming polluted in several parts of the world. Realising the importance of maintaining the cleanliness of the water

bodies, the Government of India has passed the **Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974** to safeguard our water resources.

16.2.1 Domestic Sewage and Industrial Effluents

As we work with water in our homes in the cities and towns, we wash everything into drains. Have you ever wondered where the sewage that comes out our houses go? What happens in villages? Is the sewage treated before being transported to the nearest river and mixed with it? A mere 0.1 per cent impurities make domestic sewage unfit for human use (Figure 16.2).You have read about sewage treatments plants in Chapter 10. Solids are relatively easy to remove, what is difficult to remove are

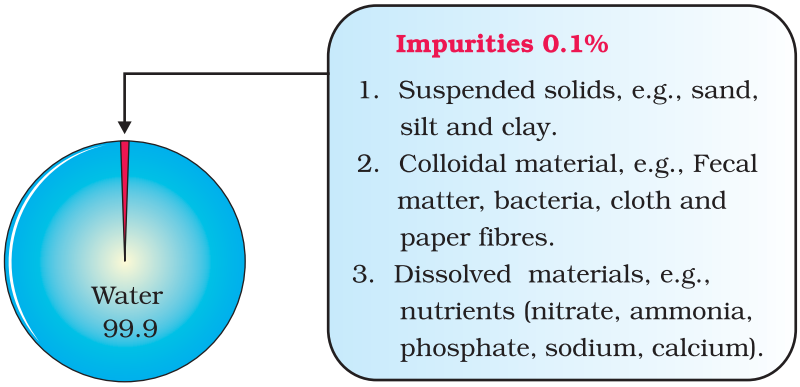


Figure 16.2 Composition of waste water

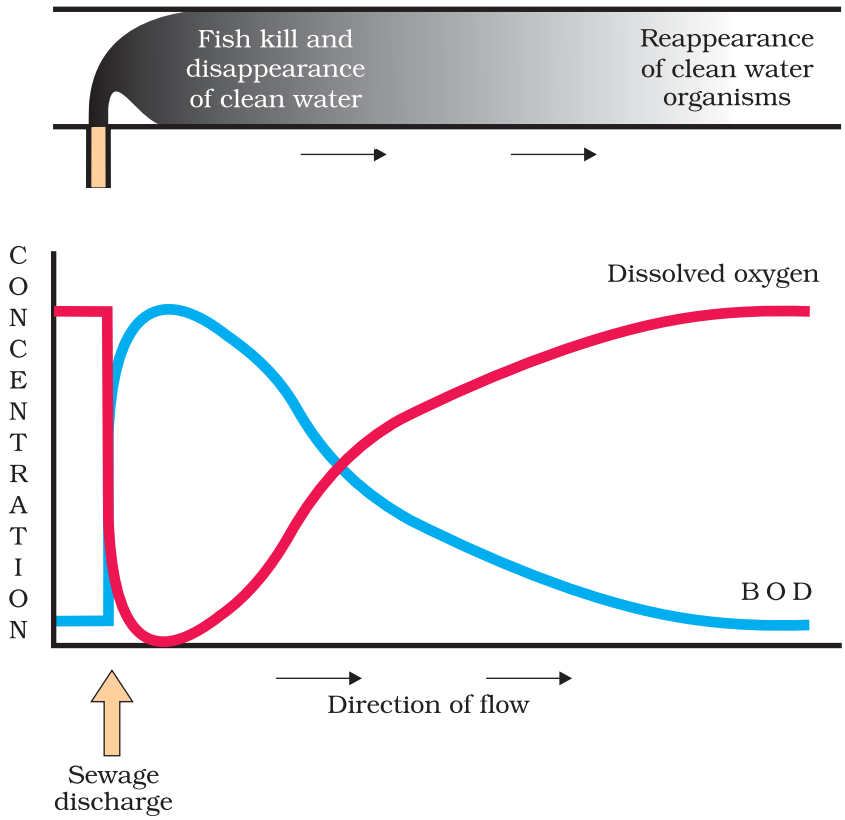


Figure 16.3 Effect of sewage discharge on some important characteristics of a river

dissolved salts such as nitrates, phosphates, and other nutrients, and toxic metal ions and organic compounds. Domestic sewage primarily contains biodegradable organic matter, which readily decomposes – thanks to bacteria and other micro-organisms, which can multiply using these organic substances as substrates and hence utilise some of the components of sewage. It is possible to estimate the amount of organic matter in sewage water by measuring **Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD).** *Can you explain how?* In the chapter on micro-organisms you have read about the relation between BOD, micro-organisms and the amount of biodegradable matter.

Figure 16.3 shows some of the changes that one may notice following discharge of sewage into a river. Micro-organisms involved in biodegradation of organic matter in the receiving water body consume a lot of oxygen, and as a result there is a sharp decline in dissolved oxygen downstream from the point of sewage discharge. This causes mortality of fish and other aquatic creatures.

Presence of large amounts of nutrients in waters also causes excessive growth of **planktonic** (free-floating) algae, called an **algal bloom** (Figure 16.4) which imparts a distinct colour to the water bodies. Algal blooms cause deterioration of the water quality and fish mortality. Some bloom-forming algae are extremely toxic to human beings and animals.

You may have seen the beautiful mauve-colored flowers found on very appealingly-shaped floating plants in water bodies. These plants which were introduced into India for their lovely flowers have caused havoc by their excessive growth by causing blocks in our waterways. They grow faster than our ability to remove them. These are plants of water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes),* the world's most problematic aquatic weed, also

Figure 16.4 Pictorial view of an algal bloom

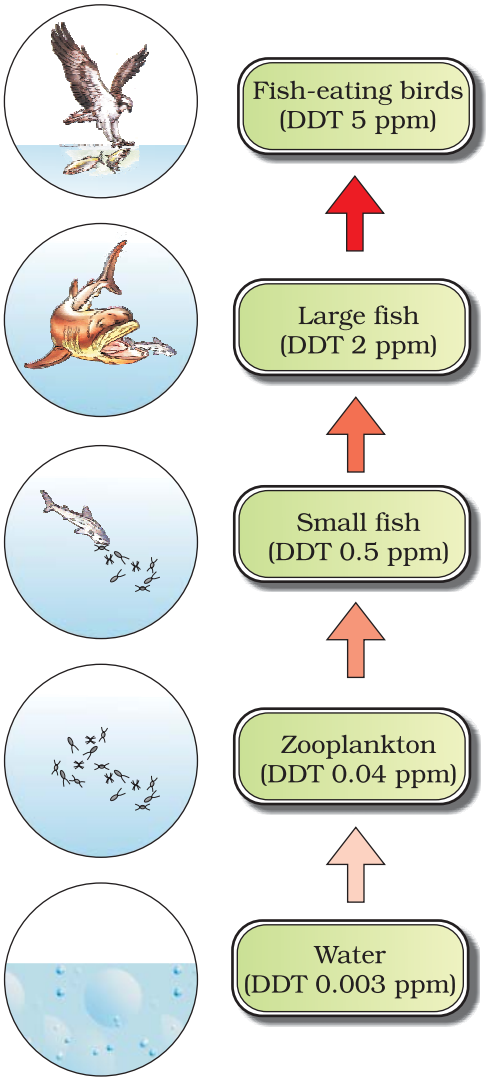


Figure 16.5 Biomagnification of DDT in an aquatic food chain

called 'Terror of Bengal'. They grow abundantly in eutrophic water bodies, and lead to an imbalance in the ecosystem dynamics of the water body.

Sewage from our homes as well from hospitals are likely to contain many undesirable pathogenic micro-organisms, and its disposal into a water without proper treatment may cause outbreak of serious diseases, such as, dysentery, typhoid, jaundice, cholera, etc.

Unlike domestic sewage, waste water from industries like petroleum, paper manufacturing, metal extraction and processing, chemical manufacturing, etc., often contain toxic substances, notably, heavy metals (defined as elements with density > 5 g/cm^3 such as mercury, cadmium, copper, lead, etc.) and a variety of organic compounds.

A few toxic substances, often present in industrial waste waters, can undergo biological magnification **(Biomagnification)** in the aquatic food chain. Biomagnification refers to increase in concentration of the toxicant at successive trophic levels. This happens because a toxic substance accumulated by an organism cannot be metabolised or excreted, and is thus passed on to the next higher trophic level. This phenomenon is well-known for mercury and DDT. Figure 16.5 shows biomagnification of DDT in an aquatic food chain. In this manner, the concentration of DDT is increased at successive trophic levels; say if it starts at 0.003 ppb (ppb = parts per billion) in water, it can ultimately can reach 25 ppm (ppm = parts per million) in fish-eating birds, through biomagnification. High concentrations of DDT disturb calcium metabolism in birds, which causes thinning of eggshell and their premature breaking, eventually causing decline in bird populations.

Eutrophication is the natural aging of a lake by biological enrichment of its water. In a young lake the water is cold and clear, supporting little life. With time, streams draining into the lake introduce nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus, which encourage the growth of aquatic organisms. As the lake's fertility increases, plant and animal life burgeons, and organic remains begin to be deposited on the lake bottom. Over the centuries, as silt and organic debris pile up, the lake grows shallower and warmer, with warm-water organisms supplanting those that thrive in a cold environment. Marsh plants take root in the shallows and begin to fill in the original lake basin. Eventually, the lake gives way to large masses of floating plants (bog), finally converting into land. Depending on climate, size of the lake and other factors, the

natural aging of a lake may span thousands of years. However, pollutants from man's activities like effluents from the industries and homes can radically accelerate the aging process. This phenomenon has been called **Cultural** or **Accelerated Eutrophication**. During the past century, lakes in many parts of the earth have been severely eutrophied by sewage and agricultural and industrial wastes. The prime contaminants are nitrates and phosphates, which act as plant nutrients. They overstimulate the growth of algae, causing unsightly scum and unpleasant odors, and robbing the water of dissolved oxygen vital to other aquatic life. At the same time, other pollutants flowing into a lake may poison whole populations of fish, whose decomposing remains further deplete the water's dissolved oxygen content. In such fashion, a lake can literally choke to death.

Heated (thermal) wastewaters flowing out of electricity-generating units, e.g., thermal power plants, constitute another important category of pollutants. Thermal wastewater eliminates or reduces the number of organisms sensitive to high temperature, and may enhance the growth of plants and fish in extremely cold areas but, only after causing damage to the indigenous flora and fauna.

16.2.2 A Case Study of Integrated Waste Water Treatment

Wastewater including sewage can be treated in an integrated manner, by utilising a mix of artificial and natural processes. An example of such an initiative is the town of Arcata, situated along the northern coast of California. Collaborating with biologists from the Humboldt State University, the townspeople created an integrated waste water treatment process within a natural system. The cleaning occurs in two stages – (a) the conventional sedimentation, filtering and chlorine treatments are given. After this stage, lots of dangerous pollutants like dissolved heavy metals still remain. To combat this, an innovative approach was taken and (b) the biologists developed a series of six connected marshes over 60 hectares of marshland. Appropriate plants, algae, fungi and bacteria were seeded into this area, which neutralise, absorb and assimilate the pollutants. Hence, as the water flows through the marshes, it gets purified naturally.

The marshes also constitute a sanctuary, with a high level of biodiversity in the form of fishes, animals and birds that now reside there. A citizens group called Friends of the Arcata Marsh (FOAM) are responsible for the upkeep and safeguarding of this wonderful project. .

All this time, we have assumed that removal of wastes requires water, i.e., the creation of sewage. But what if water is not necessary to dispose off human waste, like excreta? Can you imagine the amount of water that one can save if one didn't have to flush the toilet? Well, this is already a reality. Ecological sanitation is a sustainable system for handling human

excreta, using dry composting toilets. This is a practical, hygienic, efficient and cost-effective solution to human waste disposal. The key point to note here is that with this composting method, human excreta can be recycled into a resource (as natural fertiliser), which reduces the need for chemical fertilisers. There are working 'EcoSan' toilets in many areas of Kerala and Sri Lanka.

16.3 Solid Wastes

Solid wastes refer to everything that goes out in trash. **Municipal solid wastes** are wastes from homes, offices, stores, schools, hospitals, etc., that are collected and disposed by the municipality. The municipal solid wastes generally comprise paper, food wastes, plastics, glass, metals, rubber, leather, textile, etc. Burning reduces the volume of the wastes, although it is generally not burnt to completion and open dumps often serve as the breeding ground for rats and flies. **Sanitary landfills** were adopted as the substitute for open-burning dumps. In a sanitary landfill, wastes are dumped in a depression or trench after compaction, and covered with dirt everyday. *If you live in a town or city, do you know where the nearest landfill site is?* Landfills are also not really much of a solution since the amount of garbage generation specially in the metros has increased so much that these sites are getting filled too. Also there is danger of seepage of chemicals, etc., from these landfills polluting the underground water resources.

A solution to all this can only be in human beings becoming more sensitive to these environment issues. All waste that we generate can be categorised into three types – (a) bio-degradable, (b) recyclable and (c) the non-biodegradable. It is important that all garbage generated is sorted. What can be reused or recycled separated out; our *kabadiwallahs* and rag-pickers do a great job of separation of materials for recycling. The biodegradable materials can be put into deep pits in the ground and be left for natural breakdown. That leaves only the non-biodegradable to be disposed off. The need to reduce our garbage generation should be a prime goal, instead, we are increasing the use of non-biodegradable products. Just pick any readymade packet of any 'good quality' eatable, say a biscuit packet, and study the packaging – do you see the number of protective layers used? Note that atleast one layer is of plastic. We have started packaging even our daily use products like milk and water in polybags!! In cities, fruits and vegetables can be bought packed in beautiful polysterene and plastic packaging – we pay so much and what do we do? Contribute heavily to environmental pollution. State Governments across the country are trying to push for reduction in use of plastics and use of eco-friendly packaging. We can do our bit by carrying cloth or other natural fibre carry-bags when we go shopping and by refusing polythene bags.

16.3.1 Case Study of Remedy for Plastic Waste

A plastic sack manufacturer in Bangalore has managed to find the ideal solution to the ever-increasing problem of accumulating plastic waste. Ahmed Khan, aged 57 years old, has been producing plastic sacks for 20 years. About 8 years ago, he realised that plastic waste was a real problem. Polyblend, a fine powder of recycled modified plastic, was developed then by his company. This mixture is mixed with the bitumen that is used to lay roads. In collaboration with R.V.College of Engineering and the Bangalore City Corporation, Ahmed Khan proved that blends of Polyblend and bitumen, when used to lay roads, enhanced the bitumen's water repellant properties, and helped to increase road life by a factor of three. The raw material for creating Polyblend is any plastic film waste. So, against the price of Rs. 0.40 per kg that rag pickers had been getting for plastic waste, Khan now offers Rs.6. Using Khan's technique, by the year 2002, more than 40 kms of road in Bangalore has already been laid. At this rate, Khan will soon be running short of plastic waste in Bangalore, to produce Polyblend. Thanks to innovations like Polyblend, we might still avoid being smothered by plastic waste.

Hospitals generate hazardous wastes that contain disinfectants and other harmful chemicals, and also pathogenic micro-organisms. Such wastes also require careful treatment and disposal. The use of incinerators is crucial to disposal of hospital waste.

Irreparable computers and other electronic goods are known as **electronic wastes** (**e-wastes**). E-wastes are buried in landfills or incinerated. Over half of the e-wastes generated in the developed world are exported to developing countries, mainly to China, India and Pakistan, where metals like copper, iron, silicon, nickel and gold are recovered during recycling process. Unlike developed countries, which have specifically built facilities for recycling of e-wastes, recycling in developing countries often involves manual participation thus exposing workers to toxic substances present in e-wastes. Eventually recycling is the only solution for the treatment of e-wastes provided it is carried out in an environment-friendly manner.

16.4 Agro-chemicals and their Effects

In the wake of green revolution, use of inorganic fertilisers and pesticides has increased manifold for enhancing crop production. Pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, etc., are being increasingly used. These incidentally, are also toxic to non-target organisms,that are important components of the soil ecosystem. Do you think these can be biomagnified in the terrestrial ecosystems? We know what the addition of increasing amounts of artificial fertilisers can do to aquatic ecosystems vis-à-vis eutrophication. The current problems in agriculture are, therefore, extremely grave.

16.4.1 Case Study of Organic Farming

Integrated organic farming is a cyclical, zero-waste procedure, where waste products from one process are cycled in as nutrients for other processes. This allows the maximum utilisation of resource and increases the efficiency of production. Ramesh Chandra Dagar, a farmer in Sonipat, Haryana, is doing just this. He includes bee-keeping, dairy management, water harvesting, composting and agriculture in a chain of processes, which support each other and allow an extremely economical and sustainable venture. There is no need to use chemical fertilisers for crops, as cattle excreta (dung) are used as manure. Crop waste is used to create compost, which can be used as a natural fertiliser or can be used to generate natural gas for satisfying the energy needs of the farm. Enthusiastic about spreading information and help on the practice of integrated organic farming, Dagar has created the Haryana Kisan Welfare Club, with a current membership of 5000 farmers.

16.5 Radioactive Wastes

Initially, nuclear energy was hailed as a non-polluting way for generating electricity. Later on, it was realised that the use of nuclear energy has two very serious inherent problems. The first is accidental leakage, as occurred in the Three Mile Island and Chernobyl incidents and the second is safe disposal of radioactive wastes.

Radiation, that is given off by nuclear waste is extremely damaging to biological organisms, because it causes mutations to occur at a very high rate. At high doses, nuclear radiation is lethal but at lower doses, it creates various disorders, the most frequent of all being cancer. Therefore, nuclear waste is an extremely potent pollutant and has to be dealt with utmost caution.

It has been recommended that storage of nuclear waste, after sufficient pre-treatment, should be done in suitably shielded containers buried within the rocks, about 500 m deep below the earth's surface. However, this method of disposal is meeting stiff opposition from the public. *Why do you think this method of disposal is not agreeable to many people?*

16.6 Greenhouse Effect and Global Warming

The term 'Greenhouse effect' has been derived from a phenomenon that occurs in a greenhouse. Have you ever seen a greenhouse? It looks like a small glass house and is used for growing plants especially during winter. In a greenhouse the glass panel lets the light in, but does not allow heat to escape. Therefore, the greenhouse warms up, very much like inside a car that has been parked in the sun for a few hours.

The greenhouse effect is a naturally occurring phenomenon that is responsible for heating of Earth's surface and atmosphere. You would be

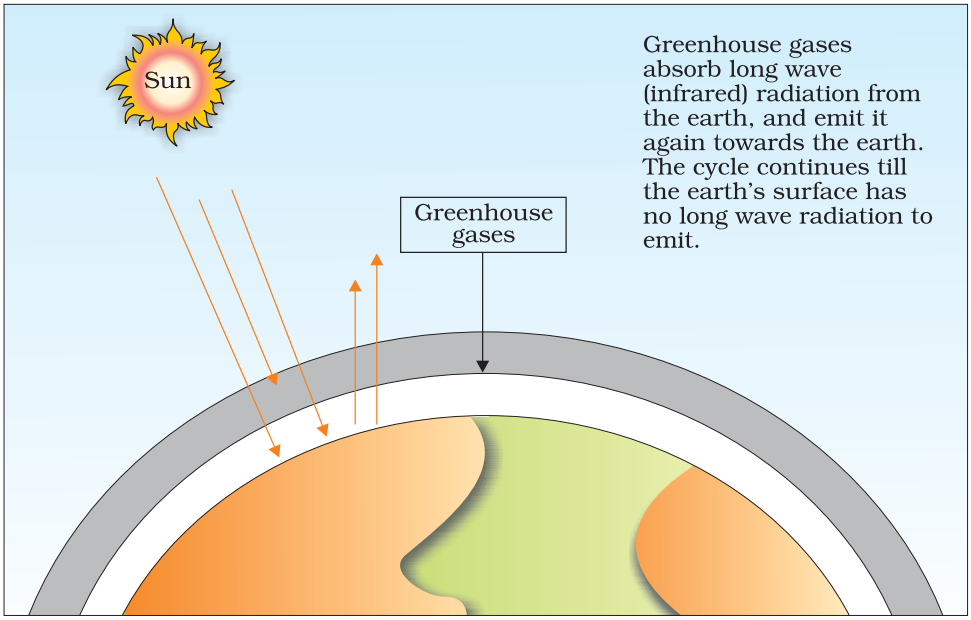


Figure 16.6 Sunlight energy at the outermost atmosphere

surprised to know that without greenhouse effect the average temperature at surface of Earth would have been a chilly –18°C rather than the present average of 15°C. In order to understand the greenhouse effect, it is necessary to know the fate of the energy of sunlight that reaches the outermost atmosphere (Figure16.6). Clouds and gases reflect about one-fourth of the incoming solar radiation, and absorb some of it but almost half of incoming solar radiation falls on Earth's surface heating it, while a small proportion is reflected back. Earth's surface re-emits heat in the form of infrared radiation but part of this does not escape into space as atmospheric gases (e.g., carbon dioxide, methane, etc.) absorb a major fraction of it. The molecules of these gases radiate heat energy, and a major part of which again comes to Earth's surface, thus heating it up once again. This cycle is repeated many a times. The above-mentioned gases – carbon dioxide and methane – are commonly known as greenhouse gases (Figure 16.7) because they are responsible for the greenhouse effect.

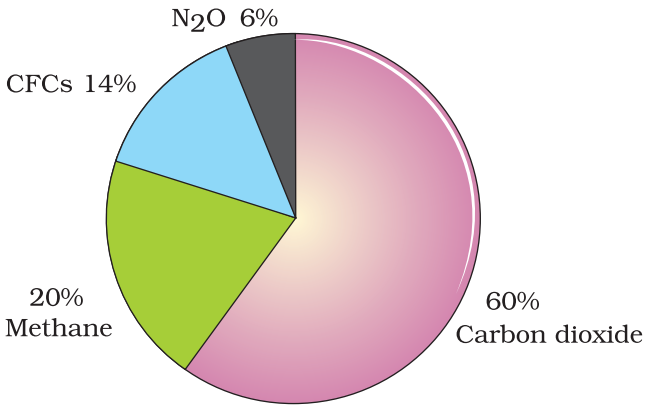


Figure 16.7 Relative contribution of various greenhouse gases to total global warming

Increase in the level of greenhouse gases has led to considerable heating of Earth leading to global warming. During the past century, the temperature of Earth has increased by 0.6 °C, most of it during the last

three decades. Scientists believe that this rise in temperature is leading to deleterious changes in the environment and resulting in odd climatic changes (e.g. El Nino effect) , thus leading to increased melting of polar ice caps as well as of other places like the Himalayan snow caps. Over many years, this will result in a rise in sea level that can submerge many coastal areas. The total spectrum of changes that global warming can bring about is a subject that is still under active research.

How can we control global warming? The measures include cutting down use of fossil fuel, improving efficiency of energy usage, reducing deforestation, planting trees and slowing down the growth of human population. International initiatives are also being taken to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

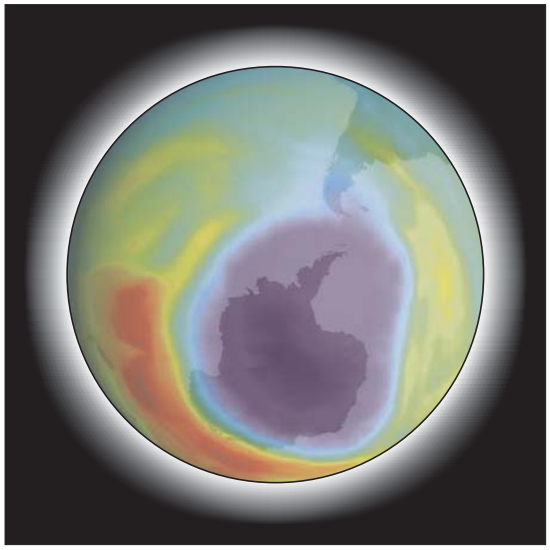


Figure 16.8 Ozone hole is the area above Antarctica, shown in purple colour, where the ozone layer is the thinnest. Ozone thickness is given in Dobson unit (see carefully the scale shown in colour violet to red). The ozone hole over Antarctica develops each year between late August and early October. *Curtesy: NASA*

16.7 Ozone Depletion in the Stratosphere

You have earlier studied in the Chemistry textbook of Class XI about 'bad' ozone, formed in the lower atmosphere (troposphere) that harms plants and animals. There is 'good' ozone also; this ozone is found in the upper part of the atmosphere called the **stratosphere**, and it acts as a shield absorbing ultraviolet radiation from the sun. UV rays are highly injurious to living organisms since DNA and proteins of living organisms preferentially absorb UV rays, and its high energy breaks the chemical bonds within these molecules. The thickness of the ozone in a column of air from the ground to the top of the atmosphere is measured in terms of **Dobson units** (DU).

Ozone gas is continuously formed by the action of UV rays on molecular oxygen, and also degraded into molecular oxygen in the stratosphere. There should be a balance between production and degradation of ozone in the stratosphere. Of late, the balance has been disrupted due to enhancement of ozone degradation by **chlorofluorocarbons** (**CFC**s). CFCs find wide use as refrigerants. CFCs discharged in the lower part of atmosphere move upward and reach stratosphere. In stratosphere, UV rays act on them releasing Cl atoms. Cl degrades ozone releasing molecular oxygen, with these atoms acting merely as catalysts; Cl atoms are not consumed in the reaction. Hence, whatever CFCs are added to the stratosphere, they have permanent and continuing affects on Ozone

levels. Although ozone depletion is occurring widely in the stratosphere, the depletion is particularly marked over the Antarctic region. This has resulted in formation of a large area of thinned ozone layer, commonly called as the **ozone hole** (Figure 16.8).

UV radiation of wavelengths shorter than UV-B, are almost completely absorbed by Earth's atmosphere, given that the ozone layer is intact. But, UV-B damages DNA and mutation may occur. It causes aging of skin, damage to skin cells and various types of skin cancers. In human eye, cornea absorbs UV-B radiation, and a high dose of UV-B causes inflammation of cornea, called **snow-blindness** cataract, etc. Such exposure may permanently damage the cornea.

Recognising the deleterious affects of ozone depletion, an international treaty, known as the **Montreal Protocol**, was signed at Montreal (Canada) in 1987 (effective in 1989) to control the emission of ozone depleting substances. Subsequently many more efforts have been made and protocols have laid down definite roadmaps, separately for developed and developing countries, for reducing the emission of CFCs and other ozone depleting chemicals.

16.8 Degradation by Improper Resource Utilisation and Maintenance

The degradation of natural resources can occur, not just by the action of pollutants but also by improper resource utilisation practices.

Soil erosion and desertification: The development of the fertile top-soil takes centuries. But, it can be removed very easily due to human activities like over-cultivation, unrestricted grazing, deforestation and poor irrigation practices, resulting in arid patches of land. When large barren patches extend and meet over time, a desert is created. Internationally, it has been recognised that desertification is a major problem nowadays, particularly due to increased urbanisation.

Waterlogging and soil salinity: Irrigation without proper drainage of water leads to waterlogging in the soil. Besides affecting the crops, waterlogging draws salt to the surface of the soil. The salt then is deposited as a thin crust on the land surface or starts collecting at the roots of the plants. This increased salt content is inimical to the growth of crops and is extremely damaging to agriculture. Waterlogging and soil salinity are some of the problems that have come in the wake of the Green Revolution.

16.9 Deforestation

Deforestation is the conversion of forested areas to non-forested ones. According to an estimate, almost 40 per cent forests have been lost in the tropics, compared to only 1 per cent in the temperate region. The present scenario of deforestation is particularly grim in India. At the beginning of

the twentieth century, forests covered about 30 per cent of the land of India. By the end of the century, it shrunk to 19.4 per cent, whereas the National Forest Policy (1988) of India has recommended 33 per cent forest cover for the plains and 67 per cent for the hills.

How does deforestation occur? A number of human activities contribute to it. One of the major reasons is the conversion of forest to agricultural land so as to feed the growing human population. Trees are axed for timber, firewood, cattle ranching and for several other purposes. **Slash and burn agriculture**, commonly called as **Jhum cultivation** in the north-eastern states of India, has also contributed to deforestation. In slash and burn agriculture, the farmers cut down the trees of the forest and burn the plant remains. The ash is used as a fertiliser and the land is then used for farming or cattle grazing. After cultivation, the area is left for several years so as to allow its recovery. The farmers then move on to other areas and repeat this process. In earlier days, when Jhum cultivation was in prevalence, enough time-gap was given such that the land recovered from the effect of cultivation. With increasing population, and repeated cultivation, this recovery phase is done away with, resulting in deforestation.

What are the consequences of deforestation? One of the major effects is enhanced carbon dioxide concentration in the atmosphere because trees that could hold a lot of carbon in their biomass are lost with deforestation. Deforestation also causes loss of biodiversity due to habitat destruction, disturbs hydrologic cycle, causes soil erosion, and may lead to desertification in extreme cases.

Reforestation is the process of restoring a forest that once existed but was removed at some point of time in the past. Reforestation may occur naturally in a deforested area. However, we can speed it up by planting trees with due consideration to biodiversity that earlier existed in that area.

16.9.1 Case Study of People's Participation in Conservation of Forests

People's participation has a long history in India. In 1731, the king of Jodhpur in Rajasthan asked one of his ministers to arrange wood for constructing a new palace. The minister and workers went to a forest near a village, inhabited by Bishnois, to cut down trees. The Bishnoi community is known for its peaceful co-existence with nature. The effort to cut down trees by the kings was thwarted by the Bishnois. A Bishnoi woman Amrita Devi showed exemplary courage by hugging a tree and daring king's men to cut her first before cutting the tree. The tree mattered much more to her than her own life. Sadly, the king's men did not heed to her pleas, and cut down the tree along with Amrita Devi. Her three daughters and hundreds of other Bishnois followed her, and thus lost their lives saving trees. Nowhere in history do we find a commitment of

this magnitude when human beings sacrificed their lives for the cause of the environment. The Government of India has recently instituted the **Amrita Devi Bishnoi Wildlife Protection Award** for individuals or communities from rural areas that have shown extraordinary courage and dedication in protecting wildlife.

You may have heard of the **Chipko Movement** of Garhwal Himalayas. In 1974, local women showed enormous bravery in protecting trees from the axe of contractors by hugging them. People all over the world have acclaimed the Chipko movement.

Realising the significance of participation by local communities, the Government of India in 1980s has introduced the concept of **Joint Forest Management (JFM)** so as to work closely with the local communities for protecting and managing forests. In return for their services to the forest, the communities get benefit of various forest products (e.g., fruits, gum, rubber, medicine, etc.), and thus the forest can be conserved in a sustainable manner.

SUMMARY

Major issues relating to environmental pollution and depletion of valuable natural resources vary in dimension from local, regional to global levels. Air pollution primarily results from burning of fossil fuel, e.g., coal and petroleum, in industries and in automobiles. They are harmful to humans, animals and plants, and therefore must be removed to keep our air clean. Domestic sewage, the most common source of pollution of water bodies, reduces dissolved oxygen but increases biochemical oxygen demand of receiving water. Domestic sewage is rich in nutrients, especially, nitrogen and phosphorus, which cause eutrophication and nuisance algal blooms. Industrial waste waters are often rich in toxic chemicals, especially heavy metals and organic compounds. Industrial waste waters harm living organisms. Municipal solid wastes also create problems and must be disposed of in landfills. Disposal of hazardous wastes like defunct ships, radioactive wastes and e-wastes requires additional efforts. Soil pollution primarily results from agricultural chemicals (e.g., pesticides) and leachates from solid wastes deposited over it.

Two major environmental issues of global nature are increasing greenhouse effect, which is warming Earth, and depletion of ozone in the stratosphere. Enhanced greenhouse effect is mainly due to increased emission of carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and CFCs., and also due to deforestation. It may drastically change rainfall pattern, global temperature, besides deleteriously affecting living organisms. Ozone in the stratosphere, which protects us from harmful effects of ultraviolet radiation, is depleting fast due to emission of CFCs thus increasing the risks of skin cancer, mutation and other disorders.

EXERCISES

1. What are the various constituents of domestic sewage? Discuss the effects of sewage discharge on a river.
2. List all the wastes that you generate, at home, school or during your trips to other places, could you very easily reduce? Which would be difficult or rather impossible to reduce?
3. Discuss the causes and effects of global warming. What measures need to be taken to control global warming?
4. Match the items given in column A and B:

Column A	**Column B**
(a) Catalytic converter	(i) Particulate matter
(b) Electrostatic precipitator	(ii) Carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxides
(c) Earmuffs	(iii) High noise level
(d) Landfills	(iv) Solid wastes

5. Write critical notes on the following:
   (a) Eutrophication
   (b) Biological magnification
   (c) Groundwater depletion and ways for its replenishment
6. Why ozone hole forms over Antarctica? How will enhanced ultraviolet radiation affect us?
7. Discuss the role of women and communities in protection and conservation of forests.
8. What measures, as an individual, you would take to reduce environmental pollution?
9. Discuss briefly the following:
   (a) Radioactive wastes
   (b) Defunct ships and e-wastes
   (c) Municipal solid wastes
10. What initiatives were taken for reducing vehicular air pollution in Delhi? Has air quality improved in Delhi?
11. Discuss briefly the following:
    (a) Greenhouse gases
    (b) Catalytic converter
    (c) Ultraviolet B

UNIT 14

ENVIRONMENTAL CHEMISTRY

Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to

- understand the meaning of environmental chemistry;
- define atmospheric pollution, list reasons for global warming, green house effect and acid rain;
- identify causes for ozone layer depletion and its effects;
- give reasons for water pollution and know about international standards for drinking water;
- describe causes of soil pollution;
- suggest and adopt strategies for control of environmental pollution;
- appreciate the importance of green chemistry in day to day life.

"The world has achieved brilliance without wisdom, power without conscience. Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants."

You have already studied about environment in your earlier classes. Environmental studies deal with the sum of all social, economical, biological, physical and chemical interrelations with our surroundings. In this unit the focus will be on environmental chemistry. Environmental chemistry deals with the study of the origin, transport, reactions, effects and fates of chemical species in the environment. Let us discuss some important aspects of environmental chemistry.

14.1 ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION

Environmental pollution is the effect of undesirable changes in our surroundings that have harmful effects on plants, animals and human beings. A substance, which causes pollution, is known as pollutant. Pollutants can be solid, liquid or gaseous substances present in greater concentration than in natural abundance and are produced due to human activities or due to natural happenings. Do you know, an average human being requires nearly 12-15 times more air than the food. So, even small amounts of pollutants in the air become significant compared to similar levels present in the food. Pollutants can be degradable, like discarded vegetables which rapidly break down by natural processes. On the other hand, pollutants which are slowly degradable, remain in the environment in an unchanged form for many decades. For example, substances such as dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT), plastic materials, heavy metals, many chemicals, nuclear wastes etc., once released into the environment are difficult to remove. These

pollutants cannot be degraded by natural processes and are harmful to living organisms. In the process of environmental pollution, pollutants originate from a source and get transported by air or water or are dumped into the soil by human beings.

14.2 ATMOSPHERIC POLLUTION

The atmosphere that surrounds the earth is not of the same thickness at all heights. There are concentric layers of air or regions and each layer has different density. The lowest region of atmosphere in which the human beings along with other organisms live is called **troposphere**. It extends up to the height of ~ 10 km from sea level. Above the troposphere, between 10 and 50 km above sea level lies **stratosphere**. Troposphere is a turbulent, dusty zone containing air, much water vapour and clouds. This is the region of strong air movement and cloud formation. The stratosphere, on the other hand, contains dinitrogen, dioxygen, ozone and little water vapour.

Atmospheric pollution is generally studied as tropospheric and stratospheric pollution. The presence of ozone in the stratosphere prevents about 99.5 per cent of the sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiations from reaching the earth's surface and thereby protecting humans and other animals from its effect.

14.2.1 Tropospheric Pollution

Tropospheric pollution occurs due to the presence of undesirable solid or gaseous particles in the air. The following are the major gaseous and particulate pollutants present in the troposphere:

1. Gaseous air pollutants: These are oxides of sulphur, nitrogen and carbon, hydrogen sulphide, hydrocarbons, ozone and other oxidants.
2. Particulate pollutants: These are dust, mist, fumes, smoke, smog etc.

1. Gaseous air pollutants

(a) Oxides of Sulphur: Oxides of sulphur are produced when sulphur containing fossil fuel is burnt. The most common species, sulphur dioxide, is a gas that is poisonous to both animals and plants. It has been reported that even a low concentration of sulphur dioxide causes respiratory diseases e.g., asthma, bronchitis, emphysema in human beings. Sulphur dioxide causes irritation to the eyes, resulting in tears and redness. High concentration of SO_2 leads to stiffness of flower buds which eventually fall off from plants. Uncatalysed oxidation of sulphur dioxide is slow. However, the presence of particulate matter in polluted air catalyses the oxidation of sulphur dioxide to sulphur trioxide.

$$2SO_2\,(g) + O_2\,(g) \rightarrow 2SO_3(g)$$

The reaction can also be promoted by ozone and hydrogen peroxide.

$$SO_2\,(g) + O_3\,(g) \rightarrow SO_3(g) + O_2\,(g)$$

$$SO_2(g) + H_2O_2(l) \rightarrow H_2SO_4(aq)$$

(b) Oxides of Nitrogen: Dinitrogen and dioxygen are the main constituents of air. These gases do not react with each other at a normal temperature. At high altitudes when lightning strikes, they combine to form oxides of nitrogen. NO_2 is oxidised to nitrate ion, NO_3^- which is washed into soil, where it serves as a fertilizer. In an automobile engine, (at high temperature) when fossil fuel is burnt, dinitrogen and dioxygen combine to yield significant quantities of nitric oxide (NO) and nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) as given below:

$$N_2\,(g) + O_2\,(g) \xrightarrow{1483K} 2NO(g)$$

NO reacts instantly with oxygen to give NO_2

$$2NO\,(g) + O_2\,(g) \rightarrow 2NO_2\,(g)$$

Rate of production of NO_2 is faster when nitric oxide reacts with ozone in the stratosphere.

$$NO\,(g) + O_3\,(g) \rightarrow NO_2\,(g) + O_2\,(g)$$

The irritant red haze in the traffic and congested places is due to oxides of nitrogen. Higher concentrations of NO_2 damage the leaves of plants and retard the rate of photosynthesis. Nitrogen dioxide is a lung irritant that can lead to an acute respiratory disease in children. It is toxic to living tissues also. Nitrogen dioxide is also harmful to various textile fibres and metals.

(c) Hydrocarbons: Hydrocarbons are composed of hydrogen and carbon only and are formed by incomplete combustion of fuel used in automobiles. Hydrocarbons are carcinogenic, *i.e.,* they cause cancer. They harm plants by causing ageing, breakdown of tissues and shedding of leaves, flowers and twigs.

(d) Oxides of Carbon

(i) Carbon monoxide: Carbon monoxide (CO) is one of the most serious air pollutants. It is a colourless and odourless gas, highly poisonous to living beings because of its ability to block the delivery of oxygen to the organs and tissues. It is produced as a result of incomplete combustion of carbon. Carbon monoxide is mainly released into the air by automobile exhaust. Other sources, which produce CO, involve incomplete combustion of coal, firewood, petrol, etc. The number of vehicles has been increasing over the years all over the world. Many vehicles are poorly maintained and several have inadequate pollution control equipments resulting in the release of greater amount of carbon monoxide and other polluting gases. Do you know why carbon monoxide is poisonous? It binds to haemoglobin to form carboxyhaemoglobin, which is about 300 times more stable than the oxygen-haemoglobin complex. In blood, when the concentration of carboxyhaemoglobin reaches about 3–4 per cent, the oxygen carrying capacity of blood is greatly reduced. This oxygen deficiency, results into headache, weak eyesight, nervousness and cardiovascular disorder. This is the reason why people are advised not to smoke. In pregnant women who have the habit of smoking the increased CO level in blood may induce premature birth, spontaneous abortions and deformed babies.

(ii) Carbon dioxide: Carbon dioxide (CO_2) is released into the atmosphere by respiration, burning of fossil fuels for energy, and by decomposition of limestone during the manufacture of cement. It is also emitted during volcanic eruptions. Carbon dioxide gas is confined to troposphere only. Normally it forms about 0.03 per cent by volume of the atmosphere. With the increased use of fossil fuels, a large amount of carbon dioxide gets released into the atmosphere. Excess of CO_2 in the air is removed by green plants and this maintains an appropriate level of CO_2 in the atmosphere. Green plants require CO_2 for photosynthesis and they, in turn, emit oxygen, thus maintaining the delicate balance. As you know, deforestation and burning of fossil fuel increases the CO_2 level and disturb the balance in the atmosphere. The increased amount of CO_2 in the air is mainly responsible for global warming.

Global Warming and Greenhouse Effect

About 75 % of the solar energy reaching the earth is absorbed by the earth's surface, which increases its temperature. The rest of the heat radiates back to the atmosphere. Some of the heat is trapped by gases such as carbon dioxide, methane, ozone, chlorofluorocarbon compounds (CFCs) and water vapour in the atmosphere. Thus, they add to the heating of the atmosphere. This causes global warming.

We all know that in cold places flowers, vegetables and fruits are grown in glass covered areas called greenhouse. Do you know that we humans also live in a greenhouse? Of course, we are not surrounded by glass but a blanket of air called the atmosphere, which has kept the temperature on earth constant for centuries. But it is now undergoing change, though slowly. Just as the glass in a greenhouse holds the sun's warmth inside, atmosphere traps the sun's heat near the earth's surface and keeps it warm. This is called *natural greenhouse effect* because it maintains the temperature and makes the earth perfect for life. In a greenhouse, visible light passes through the transparent glass and heats up the soil and the plants. The warm soil and plants emit infrared radiations. Since glass is opaque to infrared (heat) radiations, it partly reflects and partly absorbs these radiations. This mechanism keeps the energy of the sun trapped in the greenhouse. Similarly, carbon dioxide molecules also trap heat as they are transparent to sunlight but not to the heat radiation. If the amount of

carbon dioxide crosses the delicate proportion of 0.03 per cent, the natural greenhouse balance may get disturbed. Carbon dioxide is the major contributor to global warming.

Besides carbon dioxide, other greenhouse gases are methane, water vapour, nitrous oxide, CFCs and ozone. Methane is produced naturally when vegetation is burnt, digested or rotted in the absence of oxygen. Large amounts of methane are released in paddy fields, coal mines, from rotting garbage dumps and by fossil fuels. Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) are man-made industrial chemicals used in air conditioning etc. CFCs are also damaging the ozone layer (Section 14.2.2). Nitrous oxide occurs naturally in the environment. In recent years, their quantities have increased significantly due to the use of chemical fertilizers and the burning of fossil fuels. If these trends continue, the average global temperature will increase to a level which may lead to melting of polar ice caps and flooding of low lying areas all over the earth. Increase in the global temperature increases the incidence of infectious diseases like dengue, malaria, yellow fever, sleeping sickness etc.

Think it Over

What can we do to reduce the rate of global warming?

If burning of fossil fuels, cutting down forests and trees add to greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, we must find ways to use these just efficiently and judiciously. One of the simple things which we can do to reduce global warming is to minimise the use of automobiles. Depending upon the situation, one can use bicycle, public transport system, or go for carpool. We should plant more trees to increase the green cover. Avoid burning of dry leaves, wood etc. It is illegal to smoke in public places and work places, because it is harmful not only for the one who is smoking but also for others, and therefore, we should avoid it. Many people do not understand the greenhouse effect and the global warming. We can help them by sharing the information that we have.

Acid rain

We are aware that normally rain water has a pH of 5.6 due to the presence of H^+ ions formed by the reaction of rain water with carbon

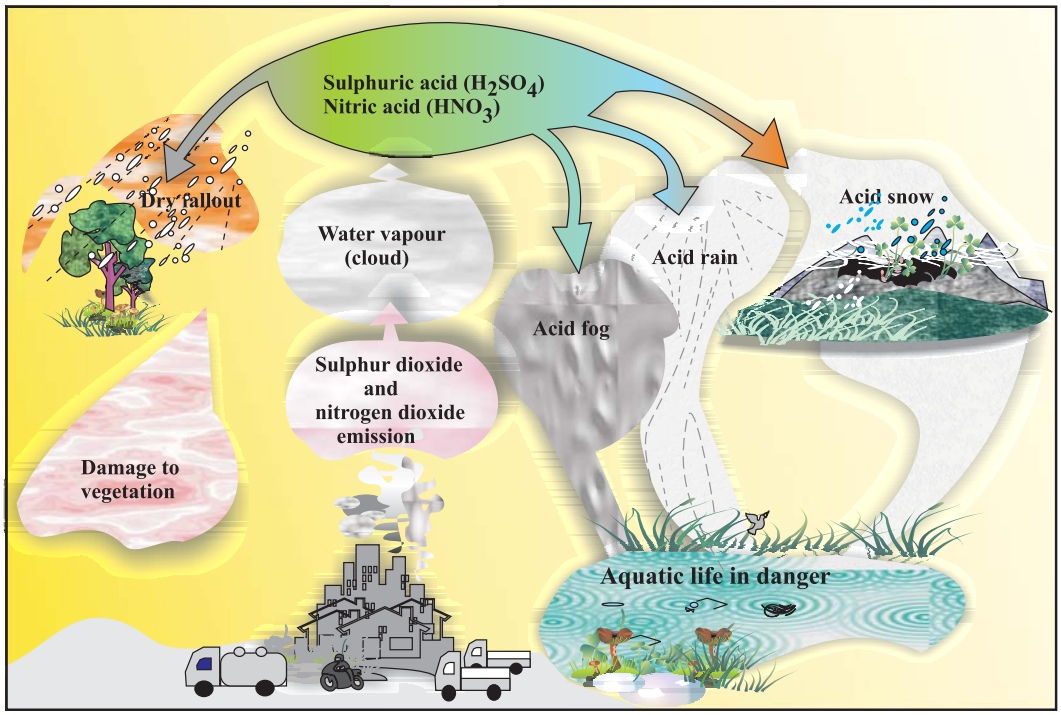


Fig. 14.1 *Acid deposition*

dioxide present in the atmosphere.

$$H_2O\,(l) + CO_2\,(g) \rightleftharpoons H_2CO_3\,(aq)$$

$$H_2CO_3\,(aq) \rightleftharpoons H^+(aq) + HCO_3^-(aq)$$

When the pH of the rain water drops below 5.6, it is called acid rain.

Acid rain refers to the ways in which acid from the atmosphere is deposited on the earth's surface. Oxides of nitrogen and sulphur which are acidic in nature can be blown by wind along with solid particles in the atmosphere and finally settle down either on the ground as dry deposition or in water, fog and snow as wet deposition. (Fig. 14.1)

Acid rain is a byproduct of a variety of human activities that emit the oxides of sulphur and nitrogen in the atmosphere. As mentioned earlier, burning of fossil fuels (which contain sulphur and nitrogenous matter) such as coal and oil in power stations and furnaces or petrol and diesel in motor engines produce sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides. SO_2 and NO_2 after oxidation and reaction with water are major contributors to acid rain, because polluted air usually contains particulate matter that catalyse the oxidation.

$$2SO_2\,(g) + O_2\,(g) + 2H_2O\,(l) \rightarrow 2H_2SO_4\,(aq)$$

$$4NO_2\,(g) + O_2\,(g) + 2H_2O\,(l) \rightarrow 4HNO_3\,(aq)$$

Ammonium salts are also formed and can be seen as an atmospheric haze (aerosol of fine particles). Aerosol particles of oxides or ammonium salts in rain drops result in wet-deposition. SO_2 is also absorbed directly on both solid and liquid ground surfaces and is thus deposited as dry-deposition.

Acid rain is harmful for agriculture, trees and plants as it dissolves and washes away nutrients needed for their growth. It causes respiratory ailments in human beings and animals. When acid rain falls and flows as ground water to reach rivers, lakes etc. it affects plants and animal life in aquatic ecosystem. It corrodes water pipes resulting in the leaching of heavy metals such as iron, lead and copper into the drinking water. Acid rain damages buildings and other structures made of stone or metal. The Taj Mahal in India has been affected by acid rain.

Activity 1

You can collect samples of water from nearby places and record their pH values. Discuss your results in the class. Let us discuss how we can help to reduce the formation of acid rain.

This can be done by reducing the emission of sulphur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide in the atmosphere. We should use less vehicles driven by fossil fuels; use less sulphur content fossil fuels for power plants and industries. We should use natural gas which is a better fuel than coal or use coal with less sulphur content. Catalytic converters must be used in cars to reduce the effect of exhaust fumes on the atmosphere. The main component of the converter is a ceramic honeycomb coated with precious metals — Pd, Pt and Rh. The exhaust gases containing unburnt fuel, CO and NO_x, when pass through the converter at 573 K, are converted into CO_2 and N_2. We can also reduce the acidity of the soil by adding powdered limestone to neutralise the acidity of the soil. Many people do not know of acid rain and its harmful effects. We can make them aware by passing on this information and save the Nature.

Taj Mahal and Acid Rain

The air around the city of Agra, where the Taj Mahal is located, contains fairly high levels of sulphur and nitrogen oxides. It is mainly due to a large number of industries and power plants around the area. Use of poor quality of coal, kerosene and firewood as fuel for domestic purposes add up to this problem. The resulting acid rain reacts with marble, $CaCO_3$ of Taj Mahal ($CaCO_3 + H_2SO_4 \rightarrow CaSO_4 + H_2O + CO_2$) causing damage to this wonderful monument that has attracted people from around the world. As a result, the monument is being slowly disfigured and the marble is getting discoloured and lustreless. The Government of India announced an action plan in early 1995 to prevent the disfiguring of this historical monument. Mathura refinery has already taken suitable measures to check the emission of toxic gases.

This plan aims at clearing the air in the **'Taj Trapezium'**– an area that includes the towns of Agra, Firozabad, Mathura and Bharatpur. Under this plan more than 2000 polluting industries lying inside the trapezium would switch over to the use of natural gas or liquefied petroleum gas instead of coal or oil. A new natural gas pipeline would bring more than half a million cubic metres of natural gas a day to this area. People living in the city will also be encouraged to use liquefied petroleum gas in place of coal, kerosene or firewood. Vehicles plying on highways in the vicinity of Taj would be encouraged to use low sulphur content diesel.

2. Particulate Pollutants

Particulates pollutants are the minute solid particles or liquid droplets in air. These are present in vehicle emissions, smoke particles from fires, dust particles and ash from industries. Particulates in the atmosphere may be viable or non-viable. The viable particulates *e.g.*, bacteria, fungi, moulds, algae etc., are minute living organisms that are dispersed in the atmosphere. Human beings are allergic to some of the fungi found in air. They can also cause plant diseases.

Non-viable particulates may be classified according to their nature and size as follows:

(a) Smoke particulates consist of solid or mixture of solid and liquid particles formed during combustion of organic matter. Examples are cigarette smoke, smoke from burning of fossil fuel, garbage and dry leaves, oil smoke etc.

(b) Dust is composed of fine solid particles (over 1μm in diameter), produced during crushing, grinding and attribution of solid materials. Sand from sand blasting, saw dust from wood works, pulverized coal, cement and fly ash from factories, dust storms etc., are some typical examples of this type of particulate emission.

(c) Mists are produced by particles of spray liquids and by condensation of vapours in air. Examples are sulphuric acid mist and herbicides and insecticides that miss their targets and travel through air and form mists.

(d) Fumes are generally obtained by the condensation of vapours during sublimation, distillation, boiling and several other chemical reactions. Generally, organic solvents, metals and metallic oxides form fume particles.

The effect of particulate pollutants are largely dependent on the particle size. Air-borne particles such as dust, fumes, mist etc., are dangerous for human health. Particulate pollutants bigger than 5 microns are likely to lodge in the nasal passage, whereas particles of about 1.0 micron enter into lungs easily.

Lead used to be a major air pollutant emitted by vehicles. Leaded petrol used to be the primary source of air-borne lead emission in Indian cities. This problem has now been overcome by using unleaded petrol in most of the cities in India. Lead interferes with the development and maturation of red blood cells.

Smog

The word smog is derived from smoke and fog. This is the most common example of air pollution that occurs in many cities throughout the world. There are two types of smog:

(a) Classical smog occurs in cool humid climate. It is a mixture of smoke, fog and sulphur dioxide. Chemically it is a reducing mixture and so it is also called as reducing smog.

(b) Photochemical smog occurs in warm, dry and sunny climate. The main components of the photochemical smog result from the action of sunlight on unsaturated hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides produced by automobiles and factories. Photochemical smog has high concentration of oxidising agents and is, therefore, called as oxidising smog.

Formation of photochemical smog

When fossil fuels are burnt, a variety of pollutants are emitted into the earth's

troposphere. Two of the pollutants that are emitted are hydrocarbons (unburnt fuels) and nitric oxide (NO). When these pollutants build up to sufficiently high levels, a chain reaction occurs from their interaction with sunlight in which NO is converted into nitrogen dioxide (NO_2). This NO_2 in turn absorbs energy from sunlight and breaks up into nitric oxide and free oxygen atom (Fig. 14.2).

$$NO_2(g) \xrightarrow{h\nu} NO(g) + O(g) \quad \text{(i)}$$

Oxygen atoms are very reactive and combine with the O_2 in air to produce ozone.

$$O(g) + O_2(g) \rightleftharpoons O_3(g) \quad \text{(ii)}$$

The ozone formed in the above reaction (ii) reacts rapidly with the NO(g) formed in the reaction (i) to regenerate NO_2. NO_2 is a brown gas and at sufficiently high levels can contribute to haze.

$$NO(g) + O_3(g) \rightarrow NO_2(g) + O_2(g) \quad \text{(iii)}$$

Ozone is a toxic gas and both NO_2 and O_3 are strong oxidising agents and can react with the unburnt hydrocarbons in the polluted air to produce chemicals such as formaldehyde, acrolein and peroxyacetyl nitrate (PAN).

$$3CH_4 + 2O_3 \rightarrow 3CH_2=O + 3H_2O$$

Formaldehyde

$CH_2=CHCH=O$ $\qquad$ CH_3COONO_2 (with O above the C=O)

Acrolein $\qquad$ Peroxyacetyl nitrate (PAN)

Effects of photochemical smog

The common components of photochemical smog are ozone, nitric oxide, acrolein, formaldehyde and peroxyacetyl nitrate (PAN). Photochemical smog causes serious health problems. Both ozone and PAN act as powerful eye irritants. Ozone and nitric oxide irritate the nose and throat and their high concentration causes headache, chest pain, dryness of the throat, cough and difficulty in breathing. Photochemical smog leads to cracking of rubber and extensive damage to plant life. It also causes corrosion of metals, stones, building materials, rubber and painted surfaces.

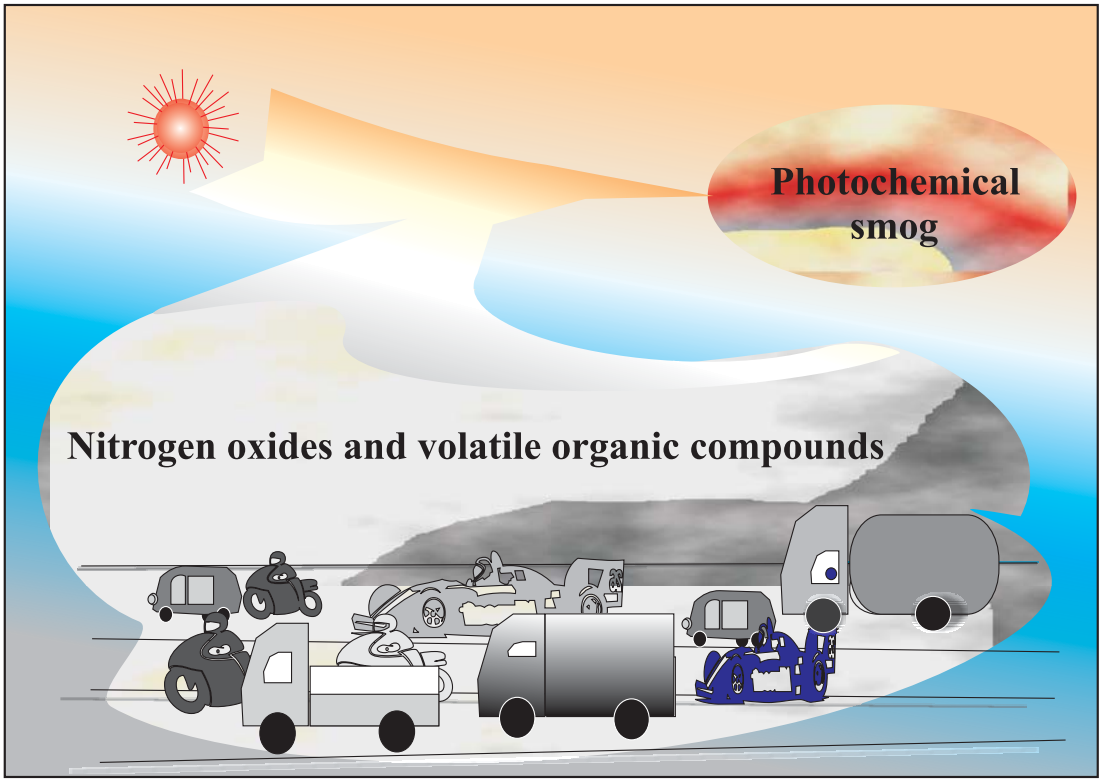


Fig. 14.2 *Photochemical smog occurs where sunlight acts on vehicle pollutants.*

How can photochemical smog be controlled ?

Many techniques are used to control or reduce the formation of photochemical smog. If we control the primary precursors of photochemical smog, such as NO_2 and hydrocarbons, the secondary precursors such as ozone and PAN, the photochemical smog will automatically be reduced. Usually catalytic converters are used in the automobiles, which prevent the release of nitrogen oxide and hydrocarbons to the atmosphere. Certain plants e.g., Pinus, Juniparus, Quercus, Pyrus and Vitis can metabolise nitrogen oxide and therefore, their plantation could help in this matter.

14.2.2 Stratospheric Pollution

Formation and Breakdown of Ozone

The upper stratosphere consists of considerable amount of ozone (O_3), which protects us from the harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiations (λ 255 nm) coming from the sun. These radiations cause skin cancer (melanoma) in humans. Therefore, it is important to maintain the ozone shield.

Ozone in the stratosphere is a product of UV radiations acting on dioxygen (O_2) molecules. The UV radiations split apart molecular oxygen into free oxygen (O) atoms. These oxygen atoms combine with the molecular oxygen to form ozone.

$$O_2(g) \xrightarrow{UV} O(g) + O(g)$$

$$O(g) + O_2(g) \overset{UV}{\rightleftharpoons} O_3(g)$$

Ozone is thermodynamically unstable and decomposes to molecular oxygen. Thus, a dynamic equilibrium exists between the production and decomposition of ozone molecules. In recent years, there have been reports of the depletion of this protective ozone layer because of the presence of certain chemicals in the stratosphere. The main reason of ozone layer depletion is believed to be the release of chlorofluorocarbon compounds (CFCs), also known as freons. These compounds are nonreactive, non flammable, non toxic organic molecules and therefore used in refrigerators, air conditioners, in the production of plastic foam and by the electronic industry for cleaning computer parts etc. Once CFCs are released in the atmosphere, they mix with the normal atmospheric gases and eventually reach the stratosphere. In stratosphere, they get broken down by powerful UV radiations, releasing chlorine free radical.

$$CF_2Cl_2(g) \xrightarrow{UV} \dot{C}l(g) + F_2Cl(g) \quad (i)$$

The chlorine radical then react with stratospheric ozone to form chlorine monoxide radicals and molecular oxygen.

$$\dot{C}l(g) + O_3(g) \rightarrow Cl\dot{O}(g) + O_2(g) \quad (ii)$$

Reaction of chlorine monoxide radical with atomic oxygen produces more chlorine radicals.

$$Cl\dot{O}(g) + O(g) \rightarrow \dot{C}l(g) + O_2(g) \quad (iii)$$

The chlorine radicals are continuously regenerated and cause the breakdown of ozone. Thus, CFCs are transporting agents for continuously generating chlorine radicals into the stratosphere and damaging the ozone layer.

The Ozone Hole

In 1980s atmospheric scientists working in Antarctica reported about depletion of ozone layer commonly known as ozone hole over the South Pole. It was found that a unique set of conditions was responsible for the ozone hole. In summer season, nitrogen dioxide and methane react with chlorine monoxide (reaction iv) and chlorine atoms (reaction v) forming chlorine sinks, preventing much ozone depletion, whereas in winter, special type of clouds called polar stratospheric clouds are formed over Antarctica. These polar stratospheric clouds provide surface on which chlorine nitrate formed (reaction iv) gets hydrolysed to form hypochlorous acid (reaction (vi)). It also reacts with hydrogen chloride produced as per reaction (v) to give molecular chlorine.

$$Cl\dot{O}(g) + NO_2(g) \rightarrow ClONO_2(g) \quad (iv)$$

$$\dot{C}l(g) + CH_4(g) \rightarrow \dot{C}H_3(g) + HCl(g) \quad (v)$$

$$ClONO_2(g) + H_2O(g) \rightarrow HOCl(g) + HNO_3(g) \quad (vi)$$

$$ClONO_2(g) + HCl(g) \rightarrow Cl_2(g) + HNO_3(g) \quad (vii)$$

When sunlight returns to the Antarctica in the spring, the sun's warmth breaks up the clouds and HOCl and Cl_2 are photolysed by sunlight, as given in reactions (viii) and (ix).

$$HOCl\,(g) \xrightarrow{h\nu} \dot{O}H\,(g) + \dot{C}l(g) \qquad \text{(viii)}$$

$$Cl_2\,(g) \xrightarrow{h\nu} 2\,\dot{C}l\,(g) \qquad \text{(ix)}$$

The chlorine radicals thus formed, initiate the chain reaction for ozone depletion as described earlier.

Effects of Depletion of the Ozone Layer

With the depletion of ozone layer, more UV radiation filters into troposphere. UV radiations lead to ageing of skin, cataract, sunburn, skin cancer, killing of many phytoplanktons, damage to fish productivity etc. It has also been reported that plant proteins get easily affected by UV radiations which leads to the harmful mutation of cells. It also increases evaporation of surface water through the stomata of the leaves and decreases the moisture content of the soil. Increase in UV radiations damage paints and fibres, causing them to fade faster.

14.3 WATER POLLUTION

Water is essential for life. Without water there would be no life. We usually take water as granted for its purity, but we must ensure the quality of water. Pollution of water originates from human activities. Through different paths, pollution reaches surface or ground water. Easily identified source or place of pollution is called as point source. e.g., municipal and industrial discharge pipes where pollutants enter the water-source. Non point sources of pollution are those where a source of pollution cannot be easily identified, e.g., agricultural run off (from farm, animals and crop-lands), acid rain, storm-water drainage (from streets, parking lots and lawns), etc. Table 14.1 lists the major water pollutants and their sources.

14.3.1 Causes of Water Pollution

(i) Pathogens: The most serious water pollutants are the disease causing agents called pathogens. Pathogens include bacteria and other organisms that enter water from domestic sewage and animal excreta. Human excreta contain bacteria such as *Escherichia coli* and *Streptococcus faecalis* which cause gastrointestinal diseases.

(ii) Organic wastes: The other major water pollutant is organic matter such as leaves, grass, trash etc. They pollute water as a consequence of run off. Excessive phytoplankton growth within water is also a cause of water pollution. These wastes are biodegradable.

The large population of bacteria decomposes organic matter present in water. They consume oxygen dissolved in water. The amount of oxygen that water can hold in the solution is limited. In cold water, dissolved oxygen (DO) can reach a concentration up to 10 ppm (parts per million), whereas oxygen in air is about 200,000 ppm. That is why even a moderate amount of organic matter when decomposes in water can deplete the water of its dissolved oxygen. The concentration of

Table 14.1 Major Water Pollutants

Pollutant	Source
Micro-organisms	Domestic sewage
Organic wastes	Domestic sewage, animal excreta and waste, decaying animals and plants, discharge from food processing factories.
Plant nutrients	Chemcial fertilizers
Toxic heavy metals	Industries and chemical factories
Sediments	Erosion of soil by agriculture and strip mining
Pesticides	Chemicals used for killing insects, fungi and weeds
Radioactive substances	Mining of uranium containing minerals
Heat	Water used for cooling in industries

dissolved oxygen in water is very important for aquatic life . If the concentration of dissolved oxygen of water is below 6 ppm, the growth of fish gets inhibited. Oxygen reaches water either through atmosphere or from the process of photosynthesis carried out by many aquatic green plants during day light. However, during night, photosynthesis stops but the plants continue to respire, resulting in reduction of dissolved oxygen. The dissolved oxygen is also used by microorganisms to oxidise organic matter.

If too much of organic matter is added to water, all the available oxygen is used up. This causes oxygen dependent aquatic life to die. Thus, anaerobic bacteria (which do not require oxygen) begin to break down the organic waste and produce chemicals that have a foul smell and are harmful to human health. Aerobic (oxygen requiring) bacteria degrade these organic wastes and keep the water depleted in dissolved oxygen.

Thus, the amount of oxygen required by bacteria to break down the organic matter present in a certain volume of a sample of water, is called **Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD)**. The amount of BOD in the water is a measure of the amount of organic material in the water, in terms of how much oxygen will be required to break it down biologically. Clean water would have BOD value of less than 5 ppm whereas highly polluted water could have a BOD value of 17 ppm or more.

(iii) Chemical Pollutants: As we know that water is an excellent solvent, water soluble inorganic chemicals that include heavy metals such as cadmium, mercury, nickel etc constitute an important class of pollutants. All these metals are dangerous to humans because our body cannot excrete them. Over the time, it crosses the tolerance limit. These metals then can damage kidneys, central nervous system, liver etc. Acids (like sulphuric acid) from mine drainage and salts from many different sources including raw salt used to melt snow and ice in the colder climates (sodium and calcium chloride) are water soluble chemical pollutants.

The organic chemicals are another group of substances that are found in polluted water. Petroleum products pollute many sources of water e.g., major oil spills in oceans. Other organic substances with serious impacts are the pesticides that drift down from sprays or runoff from lands. Various industrial chemicals like polychlorinated biphenyls, (PCBs) which are used as cleansing solvent, detergents and fertilizers add to the list of water pollutants. PCBs are suspected to be carcinogenic. Nowadays most of the detergents available are biodegradable. However, their use can create other problems. The bacteria responsible for degrading biodegradable detergent feed on it and grow rapidly. While growing, they may use up all the oxygen dissolved in water. The lack of oxygen kills all other forms of aquatic life such as fish and plants. Fertilizers contain phosphates as additives. The addition of phosphates in water enhances algae growth. Such profuse growth of algae, covers the water surface and reduces the oxygen concentration in water. This leads to anaerobic conditions, commonly with accumulation of abnoxious decay and animal death. Thus, bloom-infested water inhibits the growth of other living organisms in the water body. This process in which nutrient enriched water bodies support a dense plant population, which kills animal life by depriving it of oxygen and results in subsequent loss of biodiversity is known as ***Eutrophication***.

14.3.2 International Standards for Drinking Water

The International Standards for drinking water are given below and they must be followed.

Fluoride: For drinking purposes, water should be tested for fluoride ion concentration. Its deficiency in drinking water is harmful to man and causes diseases such as tooth decay etc. Soluble fluoride is often added to drinking water to bring its concentration upto 1 ppm or 1 mg dm^{-3}. The F^- ions make the enamel on teeth much harder by converting hydroxyapatite, $[3(Ca_3(PO_4)_2.Ca(OH)_2]$, the enamel on the surface of the teeth, into much harder fluorapatite, $[3(Ca_3(PO_4)_2.CaF_2]$.

However, F^- ion concentration above 2 ppm causes brown mottling of teeth. At the same time, excess fluoride (over 10 ppm) causes harmful effect to bones and teeth, as reported from some parts of Rajasthan.

Lead: Drinking water gets contaminated with lead when lead pipes are used for transportation of water. The prescribed upper limit concentration of lead in drinking water is about 50 ppb. Lead can damage kidney, liver, reproductive system etc.

Sulphate: Excessive sulphate (>500 ppm) in drinking water causes laxative effect, otherwise at moderate levels it is harmless.

Nitrate: The maximum limit of nitrate in drinking water is 50 ppm. Excess nitrate in drinking water can cause disease such as methemoglobinemia ('blue baby' syndrome).

Other metals: The maximum concentration of some common metals recommended in drinking water are given in Table 14.2.

Table 14.2 Maximum Prescribed Concentration of Some Metals in Drinking Water.

Metal	Maximum concentration (ppm or mg dm^{-3})
Fe	0.2
Mn	0.05
Al	0.2
Cu	3.0
Zn	5.0
Cd	0.005

Activity 2

You can visit local water sources and observe if the river/lake/tank/pond are unpolluted/slightly polluted/ moderately polluted or severely polluted by looking at water or by checking pH of water. Document the name of the river and the nearby urban or industrial site from where the pollution is generated. Inform about this to Pollution Control Board's office set up by Government to measure pollution levels. Ensure that appropriate action is taken. You can write to the press also. Do not dump waste into a household or industrial drain which can enter directly to any water body, such as, river, pond, stream or lake. Use compost instead of chemical fertilizers in gardens. Avoid the use of pesticides like DDT, malathion etc., at home and try to use dried neem leaves to help keep insects away. Add a few crystals of potassium permanganate ($KMnO_4$) or bleaching powder to the water tank of your house.

14.4 SOIL POLLUTION

India being an agriculture based economy gives high priority to agriculture, fisheries and livestock development. The surplus production is stored by governmental and non-governmental organisations for the lean season. The food loss during the storage also needs special attention. Have you ever seen the damages caused to the crops, food items by insects, rodents, weeds and crop diseases etc? How can we protect them? You are acquainted with some insecticides and pesticides for protection of our crops. However, these insecticides, pesticides and herbicides cause soil pollution. Hence, there is a need for their judicious use.

14.4.1 Pesticides

Prior to World War II, many naturally occurring chemicals such as nicotine (by planting tobacco plants in the crop field), were used as pest controlling substance for major crops in agricultural practices.

During World War II, DDT was found to be of great use in the control of malaria and other insect-borne diseases. Therefore, after the war, DDT was put to use in agriculture to control the damages caused by insects, rodents, weeds and various crop diseases. However, due to adverse effects, its use has been banned in India.

Pesticides are basically synthetic toxic chemicals with ecological repercussions. The repeated use of the same or similar pesticides give rise to pests that are resistant to that

group of pesticides thus making the pesticides ineffective. Therefore, as insect resistance of DDT increased, other organic toxins such as Aldrin and Dieldrin were introduced in the market by pesticide industry. Most of the organic toxins are water insoluble and non-biodegradable. These high persistent toxins are, therefore, transferred from lower trophic level to higher trophic level through food chain (Fig.14.3). Over the time, the concentration of toxins in higher animals reach a level which causes serious metabolic and physiological disorders.

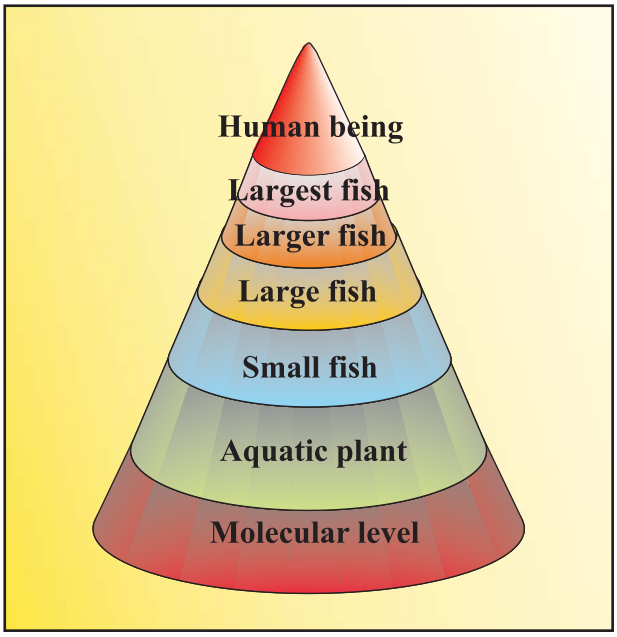


Fig. 14.3 *At each trophic level, the pollutant gets 10 times concentrated.*

In response to high persistence of chlorinated organic toxins, a new series of less persistent or more bio-degradable products called organo-phosphates and carbamates have been introduced in the market. But these chemicals are severe nerve toxins and hence more harmful to humans. As a result, there are reports of some pesticides related deaths of agricultural field workers. Insects have become resistant to these insecticides also. The insecticide industry is engaged in developing new groups of insecticides. But one has to think, is this the only solution to pest menace?

These days, the pesticide industry has shifted its attention to **herbicides** such as sodium chlorate ($NaClO_3$), sodium arsinite (Na_3AsO_3) and many others. During the first half of the last century, the shift from mechanical to chemical weed control had provided the industry with flourishing economic market. But one must remember that these are also not environment friendly.

Most herbicides are toxic to mammals but are not as persistent as organo-chlorides. These chemicals decompose in a few months. Like organo-chlorides, these too become concentrated in the food web. Some herbicides cause birth defects. Studies show that corn-fields sprayed with herbicides are more prone to insect attack and plant disease than fields that are weeded manually.

Pesticides and herbicides represent only a very small portion of widespread chemical pollution. A large number of other compounds that are used regularly in chemical and industrial processes for manufacturing activities are finally released in the atmosphere in one or other form.

14.5 INDUSTRIAL WASTE

Industrial solid wastes are also sorted out as biodegradable and non-degradable wastes. Biodegradable wastes are generated by cotton mills, food processing units, paper mills, and textile factories.

Non-biodegradable wastes are generated by thermal power plants which produce fly ash; integrated iron and steel plants which produce blast furnace slag and steel melting slag. Industries manufacturing aluminium, zinc and copper produce mud and tailings. Fertilizer industries produce gypsum. Hazardous wastes such as inflammables, composite explosives or highly reactive substances are produced by industries dealing in metals, chemicals, drugs, pharmaceuticals, dyes, pesticides, rubber goods etc.

The disposal of non-degradable industrial solid wastes, if not done by a proper and suitable method, may cause serious threat to the environment. New innovations have led to different uses of waste material. Nowadays, fly ash and slag from the steel industry are utilised by the cement industry. Large

quantities of toxic wastes are usually destroyed by controlled incineration, whereas small quantities are burnt along with factory garbage in open bins. Moreover, solid wastes if not managed effectively, affect the components of the environment.

Do you know about waste recycling?

- Fuel obtained from plastic waste has high octane rating. It contains no lead and is known as "green fuel".
- Due to recent developments made in chemical and textile industries, clothes will be made from recycled plastic waste. These will be available soon in the global textile market.
- In India, our cities and towns face endless hours of power cut. We can also see piles of rotting garbage here and there. There is a good news that we can get rid from both these problems simultaneously. Technology has now been developed to produce electricity from the garbage. A pilot plant has been set up, where after removing ferrous metals, plastic, glass, paper etc. from garbage, it is mixed with water. It is then cultured with bacterial species for producing methane, commonly known as biogas. The remaining product is used as manure and biogas is used to produce electricity.

14.6 STRATEGIES TO CONTROL ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION

After studying air, water, soil and industrial waste pollution in this unit, by now you must have started feeling the need of controlling environmental pollution: How can you save your immediate environment? Think of the steps/activities, which you would like to undertake for controlling air, water, soil and industrial waste pollution in your neighbourhood. Here, an idea about the strategies for the management of waste is given.

14.6.1 Waste Management

Solid waste is not the only waste, which you see in your household garbage box. Besides household discards, there are medical, agricultural, industrial and mining wastes. The improper disposal of wastes is one of the major causes of environmental degradation. Therefore, the management of wastes is of utmost importance.

Collection and Disposal

Domestic wastes are collected in small bins, which are then transferred to community bins by private or municipal workers. From these community bins, these are collected and carried to the disposable site. At the site, garbage is sorted out and separated into biodegradable and non-biodegradable materials. Non-biodegradable materials such as plastic, glass, metal scraps etc. are sent for recycling. Biodegradable wastes are deposited in land fills and are converted into compost.

The waste if not collected in garbage bins, finds its way into the sewers. Some of it is eaten by cattle. Non-biodegradable wastes like polythene bag, metal scraps, etc. choke the sewers and cause inconvenience. Polythene bags, if swallowed by cattle can cost their lives also.

As a normal practice, therefore, all domestic wastes should be properly collected and disposed. The poor management causes health problems leading to epidemics due to contamination of ground water. It is specially hazardous for those who are in direct contact with the waste such as rag pickers and workers involved in waste disposal, as they are the ones who handle waste materials mostly without protective device such as gloves or water proof boots and gas masks. What can you do for them?

14.7 GREEN CHEMISTRY

14.7.1 Introduction

It is well known fact that self-sufficiency in food has been achieved in India since late 20^{th} century by using fertilizers and pesticides and exploring improved methods of farming, good quality seeds, irrigation etc. But over-exploitation of soil and excessive use of fertilizers and pesticides have resulted in the deterioration of soil, water and air.

The solution of this problem does not lie in stopping the process of development that has been set in; but to discover methods, which would help in the reduction of deterioration of the environment. *Green chemistry is a way of thinking and is about utilising the existing knowledge and principles of chemistry and other sciences to reduce the adverse impact on environment. Green chemistry is a production process that would bring about minimum pollution or deterioration to the environment. The byproducts generated during a process, if not used gainfully, add to the environmental pollution. Such processes are not only environmental unfriendly but also cost-ineffective. The waste generation and its disposal both are economically unsound. Utilisation of existing knowledge base for reducing the chemical hazards along with the developmental activities is the foundation of green chemistry.* Have you perceived the idea of green chemistry ? It is well known that organic solvents such as benzene, toluene, carbon tetrachloride etc., are highly toxic. One should be careful while using them.

As you know, a chemical reaction involves reactants, attacking reagents and the medium in which the reaction takes place. Extent of any reaction depends upon physical parameters like temperature, pressure and use of catalyst. In a chemical reaction, if reactants are fully converted into useful environmental friendly products by using an environment friendly medium then there would be no chemical pollutants introduced in the environment.

During a synthesis, care must be taken to choose starting materials that can be converted into end products with yield approximately upto 100 per cent. This can be achieved by arriving at optimum conditions of synthesis. It may be worthwhile to carry out synthetic reactions in aqueous medium since water has high specific heat and low volatility. Water is cost effective, noninflammable and devoid of any carcinogenic effects.

Nobel goes to Green Chemists

Yves Chauvin

Robert H. Grubbs

Richard R. Schrock

Yves Chauvin, Institut Français du Pétrole, Rueil-Malmaison France, **Robert H. Grubbs** California Institute of Technology (Caltech), Pasadena, CA, USA and **Richard R. Schrock** Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Cambridge, MA, USA won the 2005 Nobel Prize in chemistry for work that reduces hazardous waste in creating new chemicals. The trio won the award for their development of the metathesis method in organic synthesis –a way to rearrange groups of atoms within molecules that the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences likened to a dance in which couples change partners. The metathesis has tremendous commercial potential in the pharmaceuticals, biotechnology and food stuffs production industries. It is also used in the development of revolutionary environmentally-friendlier polymers.

This represents a great step forward for 'green chemistry', reducing potentially hazardous waste through smarter production. Metathesis is an example of how important application of basic science is for the benefit of man, society and the environment.

14.7.2 Green Chemistry in day-to-day Life

(i) Dry Cleaning of Clothes

Tetra chlroroethene ($Cl_2C=CCl_2$) was earlier used as solvent for dry cleaning. The compound contaminates the ground water and is also a suspected carcinogen. The process using this compound is now being replaced by a process, where liquefied carbondioxide, with a suitable detergent is used. Replacement of halogenated solvent by liquid CO_2 will result in less harm to ground water.

These days hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2) is used for the purpose of bleaching clothes in the process of laundary, which gives better results and makes use of lesser amount of water.

(ii) Bleaching of Paper

Chlorine gas was used earlier for bleaching paper. These days, hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2) with suitable catalyst, which promotes the bleaching action of hydrogen peroxide, is used.

(iii) Synthesis of Chemicals

Ethanal (CH_3CHO) is now commercially prepared by one step oxidation of ethene in the presence of ionic catalyst in aqueous medium with an yield of 90%.

$$CH_2 = CH_2 + O_2 \xrightarrow[Pd(II)/Cu(II)(\text{in water})]{\text{Catalyst}} CH_3CHO\,(90\%)$$

Green chemistry, in a nutshell, is a cost effective approach which involves reduction in material, energy consumption and waste generation.

Think it Over

What is our responsibility as a human being to protect our environment?

Some concepts, if followed by an individual, contribute towards a better quality of our environment and human life. Always set up a compost tin in your garden or any other place in your home and use it to produce manure for your plants to reduce the use of fertilizers. Use a cloth bag and avoid asking for plastic carry bags when you buy groceries, vegetables or any other item. See that all newspapers, glass, aluminum and other items in your area are recycled. We might have to take little trouble to locate such dealers. We must realize that we do not have solutions for every problem but we can concentrate on issues, which we feel strongly about and can do some thing about. We should take care to put into practice whatever we preach. Always remember environment protection begins with us.

SUMMARY

Environmental chemistry plays a major role in environment. Chemical species present in the environment are either naturally occurring or generated by human activities. **Environmental pollution** is the effect of undesirable changes in the surrounding that have harmful effects on plants, animals and human beings. Pollutants exist in all the three states of matter. We have discussed only those pollutants, which are due to human activities, and can be controlled. Atmospheric pollution is generally studied as **tropospheric** and **stratospheric pollution**. Troposphere is the lowest region of the atmosphere (~10 km) in which man along with other organisms including plants exist. Whereas stratosphere extends above troposphere up to 50 km above sea level. Ozone layer is one of the important constituents of stratosphere. Tropospheric pollution is basically due to various oxides of sulphur, nitrogen, carbon, halogens and also due to particulate pollutants. The gaseous pollutants come down to the earth in the form of **acid rain**. 75% of the solar energy reaching earth is absorbed by the earth surface and rest is radiated back to the atmosphere. These gases mentioned above trap the heat which result into **global warming**. It is important to realise that these very gases are also responsible for the life on the earth as they trap the requisite amount of solar

energy for the sustainance of life. The increase in the **greenhouse gases** is raising the temperature of the earth's atmosphere which, if not checked, may eventually result in melting of polar ice caps and consequently may submerge the costal land mass. Many human activities are producing chemicals, which are responsible for the **depletion of ozone layer** in the stratosphere, leading to the formation of **ozone hole**. Through the ozone hole, ultraviolet radiations can penetrate into the earth's atmosphere causing mutation of genes. Water is the elixir of life but the same water, if polluted by pathogens, organic wastes, toxic heavy metals, pesticides etc., will turn into poison. Therefore, one should take care to follow international standards to maintain purity levels of drinking water. Industrial wastes and excessive use of pesticides, result into pollution of land mass and water bodies. Judicious use of chemicals required for agricultural practices can lead to sustainable development. **Strategies for controlling environmental pollution** can be: (i) waste management *i.e.,* reduction of the waste and proper disposal, also recycling of materials and energy, (ii) adopting methods in day-to-day life, which results in the reduction of environmental pollution. The second method is a new branch of chemistry, which is in its infancy known as **green chemistry**. It utilizes the existing knowledge and practices so as to bring about reduction in the production of pollutants.

EXERCISES

14.1 Define environmental chemistry.

14.2 Explain tropospheric pollution in 100 words.

14.3 Carbon monoxide gas is more dangerous than carbon dioxide gas. Why?

14.4 List gases which are responsible for greenhouse effect.

14.5 Statues and monuments in India are affected by acid rain. How?

14.6 What is smog? How is classical smog different from photochemical smogs?

14.7 Write down the reactions involved during the formation of photochemical smog.

14.8 What are the harmful effects of photochemical smog and how can they be controlled?

14.9 What are the reactions involved for ozone layer depletion in the stratosphere?

14.10 What do you mean by ozone hole? What are its consequences?

14.11 What are the major causes of water pollution? Explain.

14.12 Have you ever observed any water pollution in your area? What measures would you suggest to control it?

14.13 What do you mean by Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD)?

14.14 Do you observe any soil pollution in your neighbourhood? What efforts will you make for controlling the soil pollution?

14.15 What are pesticides and herbicides? Explain giving examples.

14.16 What do you mean by green chemistry? How will it help decrease environmental pollution?

14.17 What would have happened if the greenhouse gases were totally missing in the earth's atmosphere? Discuss.

14.18 A large number of fish are suddenly found floating dead on a lake. There is no evidence of toxic dumping but you find an abundance of phytoplankton. Suggest a reason for the fish kill.

14.19 How can domestic waste be used as manure?

14.20 For your agricultural field or garden you have developed a compost producing pit. Discuss the process in the light of bad odour, flies and recycling of wastes for a good produce.

9

Environment and Sustainable Development

After studying this chapter, the learners will

- understand the concept of environment
- analyse the causes and effects of 'environmental degradation' and 'resource depletion'
- understand the nature of environmental challenges facing India
- relate environmental issues to the larger context of sustainable development.

The environment, left to itself, can continue to support life for millions of years. The single most unstable and potentially disruptive element in the scheme is the human species. Human beings, with modern technology, have the capacity to bring about, intentionally or unintentionally, far-reaching and irreversible changes in the enviornment.

Anonymous

9.1 Introduction

In the earlier chapters we have discussed the main economic issues faced by the Indian economy. The economic development that we have achieved so far has come at a very heavy price—at the cost of environmental quality. As we step into an era of globalisation that promises higher economic growth, we have to bear in mind the adverse consequences of the past development path on our environment and consciously choose a path of sustainable development. To understand the unsustainable path of development that we have taken and the challenges of sustainable development, we have to first understand the significance and contribution of environment to economic development. With this in mind, this chapter is divided into three sections. The first part deals with the functions and role of environment. The second section discusses the state of India's environment and the third section deals with steps and strategies to achieve sustainable development.

9.2 Environment — Definition and Functions

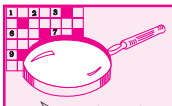
Environment is defined as the total planetary inheritance and the totality of all resources. It includes all the biotic and abiotic factors that influence each other. While all living elements—the birds, animals and plants, forests, fisheries etc.—are biotic elements, abiotic elements include air, water, land etc. Rocks and sunlight are all examples of abiotic elements of the environment. A study of the environment then calls for a study of the inter-relationship between these biotic and abiotic components of the environment.

Functions of the Environment: The environment performs four vital functions (i) it supplies resources: resources here include both renewable and non-renewable resources. Renewable resources are those which can be used without the possibility of the resource becoming depleted or exhausted. That is, a continuous supply of the resource remains available. Examples of renewable resources are the trees in the forests and the fishes in the ocean. Non-renewable resources, on the other hand, are those which get exhausted with extraction and use, for example, fossil fuel (ii) it assimilates waste (iii) it sustains life by providing genetic and bio diversity and (iv) it also provides aesthetic services like scenery etc.

The environment is able to perform these functions without any interruption as long as the demand on these

Fig. 9.1 *Water bodies: small, snow-fed Himalayan streams are the few fresh-water sources that remain unpolluted.*

functions is within its **carrying capacity**. This implies that the resource extraction is not above the rate of regeneration of the resource and the wastes generated are within the assimilating capacity of the environment. When this is not so, the environment fails to perform its third and vital function of life sustenance and this results in an environmental crisis. This is the situation today all over the world. The rising population of the developing countries and the affluent consumption and production standards of the developed world have placed a huge stress on the environment in terms of its first two functions. Many resources have become extinct and the wastes generated are beyond the absorptive capacity of the environment. **Absorptive capacity** means the ability of the environment to absorb degradation. The result — we are today at the threshold of environmental crisis. The past development has polluted and dried up rivers and other aquifers making water an economic good. Besides, the intensive and extensive extraction of both renewable and non-renewable resources has exhausted some of these



Work These Out

- Why has water become an economic commodity? Discuss.
- Fill in the following table with some common types of diseases and illnesses that are caused due to air, water and noise pollution.

Air Pollution	*Water Pollution*	*Noise Pollution*
Asthma	Cholera	

Box 9.1: Global Warming

Global warming is a gradual increase in the average temperature of the earth's lower atmosphere as a result of the increase in greenhouse gases since the **Industrial Revolution**. Much of the recent observed and projected global warming is human-induced. It is caused by man-made increases in carbon dioxide and other **greenhouse gases** through the burning of **fossil fuels** and **deforestation**. Adding carbon dioxide, methane and such other gases (that have the potential to absorb heat) to the atmosphere with no other changes will make our planet's surface warmer. The atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide and CH_4 have increased by 31 per cent and 149 per cent respectively above pre-industrial levels since 1750. During the past century, the atmospheric temperature has risen by 1.1 F (0.6 C) and sea level has risen several inches. Some of the longer-term results of global warming are melting of polar ice with a resulting rise in sea level and coastal flooding; disruption of drinking water supplies dependent on snow melts; extinction of species as ecological niches disappear; more frequent tropical storms; and an increased incidence of tropical diseases.

Among factors that may be contributing to global warming are the burning of coal and petroleum products (sources of carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, ozone); deforestation, which increases the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere; methane gas released in animal waste; and increased cattle production, which contributes to deforestation, methane production, and use of fossil fuels. A UN Conference on Climate Change, held in Kyoto, Japan, in 1997, resulted in an international agreement to fight global warming which called for reductions in emissions of greenhouse gases by industrialised nations.

Source: *www.wikipedia.org*

vital resources and we are compelled to spend huge amounts on technology and research to explore new resources. Added to these are the health costs of degraded environmental quality — decline in air and water quality (seventy per cent of water in India is polluted) have resulted in increased incidence of respiratory and water-borne diseases. Hence the expenditure on health is also rising. To make matters worse, global environmental issues such as **global warming** and **ozone depletion** also contribute to increased financial commitments for the government. Thus, it is clear that the **opportunity costs** of negative environmental impacts are high.

The biggest question that arises is: are environmental problems new to this century? If so, why? The answer to this question requires some elaboration. In the early days when civilisation just began, or before this phenomenal increase in population, and before countries took to industrialisation, the demand for environmental resources and services was much less than their supply. This meant that pollution was within the absorptive capacity of the

Box 9.2: Ozone Depletion

Ozone depletion refers to the phenomenon of reductions in the amount of ozone in the **stratosphere**. The problem of ozone depletion is caused by high levels of chlorine and bromine compounds in the stratosphere. The origins of these compounds are chlorofluorocarbons (CFC), used as cooling substances in air-conditioners and refrigerators, or as aerosol propellants, and bromofluorocarbons (halons), used in fire extinguishers. As a result of depletion of the ozone layer, more ultraviolet (UV) radiation comes to Earth and causes damage to living organisms. UV radiation seems responsible for skin cancer in humans; it also lowers production of phytoplankton and thus affects other aquatic organisms. It can also influence the growth of terrestrial plants. A reduction of approximately 5 per cent in the ozone layer was detected from 1979 to 1990. Since the **ozone layer** prevents most harmful wavelengths of ultraviolet light from passing through the **Earth's atmosphere**, observed and projected decreases in ozone have generated worldwide concern. This led to the adoption of the **Montreal Protocol** banning the use of chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) compounds, as well as other ozone depleting chemicals such as carbon tetrachloride, trichloroethane (also known as methyl chloroform), and bromine compounds known as **halons.**

Source: *www.ceu.hu*

environment and the rate of resource extraction was less than the rate of regeneration of these resources. Hence environmental problems did not arise.

Fig. 9.2 *Damodar Valley is one of India's most industrialised regions. Pollutants from the heavy industries along the banks of the Damodar river are converting it into an ecological disaster*

But with population explosion and with the advent of industrial revolution to meet the growing needs of the expanding population, things changed. The result was that the demand for resources for both production and consumption went beyond the rate of regeneration of the resources; the pressure on the absorptive capacity of the environment increased tremendously — this trend continues even today. Thus what has happened is a reversal of supply-demand relationship for environmental quality — we are now faced with increased demand for environmental resources and services but their supply is limited due to overuse

and misuse. Hence the environmental issues of waste generation and pollution have become critical today.

Fig. 9.3 *Deforestation leads to land degradation, biodiversity loss and air pollution*

9.3 State of India's Environment

India has abundant natural resources in terms of rich quality of soil, hundreds of rivers and tributaries, lush green forests, plenty of mineral deposits beneath the land surface, vast stretch of the Indian Ocean, ranges of mountains, etc. The black soil of the Deccan Plateau is particularly suitable for cultivation of cotton, leading to concentration of textile industries in this region. The Indo-Gangetic plains — spread from the Arabian Sea to the Bay of Bengal — are one of the most fertile, intensively cultivated and densely populated regions in the world. India's forests, though unevenly distributed, provide green cover for a majority of its population and natural cover for its wildlife. Large deposits of iron-ore, coal and natural gas are found in the country. India alone accounts for nearly 20 per cent of the world's total iron-ore reserves. Bauxite, copper, chromate, diamonds, gold, lead, lignite, manganese, zinc, uranium, etc. are also available in different parts of the country. However, the developmental activities in India have resulted in pressure on its finite natural resources, besides creating impacts on human health and well-being. The threat to India's environment poses a dichotomy—threat of poverty-induced environmental degradation and, at the same time, threat of pollution from affluence and a rapidly growing industrial sector. Air pollution, water contamination, soil erosion, deforestation and wildlife extinction are some of the most pressing environmental concerns of India. The priority issues identified are (i) land degradation (ii) biodiversity loss (iii) air pollution with special reference to vehicular pollution in urban cities (iv) management of fresh water and (v) solid waste management. Land in India suffers from varying degrees and types of degradation stemming mainly from unstable use and inappropriate management practices.

Box. 9.3: Chipko or Appiko — What's in a Name?

You may be aware of the Chipko Movement, which aimed at protecting forests in the Himalayas. In Karnataka, a similar movement took a different name, 'Appiko', which means to hug. On 8 September 1983, when the felling of trees was started in Salkani forest in Sirsi district, 160 men, women and children hugged the trees and forced the woodcutters to leave. They kept vigil in the forest over the next six weeks. Only after the forest officials assured the volunteers that the trees will be cut scientifically and in accordance with the working plan of the district, did they leave the trees.

When commercial felling by contractors damaged a large number of natural forests, the idea of hugging the trees gave the people hope and confidence that they can protect the forests. On that particular incident, with the felling discontinued, the people saved 12,000 trees. Within months, this movement spread to many adjoining districts.

Indiscriminate felling of trees for fuelwood and for industrial use has led to many environmental problems. Twelve years after setting up of a paper mill in Uttar Kanara area, bamboo has been wiped out from that area. "Broad-leaved trees which protected the soil from the direct onslaught of rain have been removed, the soil washed away, and bare laterite soil left behind. Now nothing grows but a weed", says a farmer. Farmers also complain that rivers and rivulets dry up quicker, and that rainfall is becoming erratic. Diseases and insects earlier unknown are now attacking the crops.

Appiko volunteers want the contractors and forest officials to follow certain rules and restrictions. For instance, local people should be consulted when trees are marked for felling and trees within 100 metres of a water source and on a slope of 30 degrees or above should not be felled.

Do you know that the government allocates forestlands to industries to use forest materials as industrial raw material? Even if a paper mill employs 10,000 workers and a plywood factory employs 800 people but if they deprive the daily needs of a million people, is it acceptable? What do you think?

Source: *Excerpts from 'State of India's Environment 2: The Second Citizens' Report 1984-85', Centre for Science and Environment, 1996, New Delhi.*

Some of the factors responsible for land degradation are (i) loss of vegetation occuring due to deforestation (ii) unsustainable fuel wood and fodder extraction (iii) shifting cultivation (iv) encroachment into forest lands (v) forest fires and over grazing (vi) non-adoption of adequate soil conservation measures (vii) improper crop rotation (viii) indiscriminate use of agro-chemicals such as fertilisers and pesticides (ix) improper planning and management of irrigation systems (x) extraction of ground water in excess of the recharge capacity (xi) open access resource and (xii) poverty of the agriculture-dependent people.

India supports approximately 16 per cent of the world's human and 20 per cent of livestock population on a mere 2.5 per cent of the world's geographical area. The high density of population and livestock and the competing uses of land for forestry, agriculture, pastures, human settlements and industries exert an enormous pressure on the country's finite land resources.

The per capita forestland in the country is only 0.08 hectare against the requirement of 0.47 hectare to meet basic needs, resulting in an excess felling of about 15 million cubic metre forests over the permissible limit.

Estimates of soil erosion show that soil is being eroded at a rate of 5.3 billion tonnes a year for the entire country as a result of which the country loses 0.8 million tonnes of nitrogen, 1.8 million tonnes of phosphorus and 26.3 million tonnes of potassium every year. According to the Government of India, the quantity of nutrients lost due to erosion each year ranges from 5.8 to 8.4 million tonnes.

Work These Out

➢ In order to enable the students to appreciate the contribution of environment to economic development, the following game can be introduced. One student may name a product used by any enterprise and the other student may trace out its roots to nature and earth.

trucks ← steel and rubber
steel ← iron ← mineral ← earth
rubber ← trees ← forests ← earth
books ← paper ← trees ← fruit ← earth
cloth ← cotton ← plant ← nature
petrol ← earth
machinery ← Iron ← Mineral ← Earth

➢ A truck driver had to pay Rs 1,000 as challan as his truck was emitting black soot. Why do you think he was penalised? Was it justified? Discuss.

Box 9.4 : Pollution Control Boards

In order to address two major environmental concerns in India, viz., water and air pollution, the government set up the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) in 1974. This was followed by states establishing their own state level boards to address all the environmental concerns. They investigate, collect and disseminate information relating to water, air and land pollution, lay down standards for sewage/trade effluent and emissions. These boards provide technical assistance to governments in promoting cleanliness of streams and wells by prevention, control and abatement of water pollution, and improve the quality of air and to prevent, control or abate air pollution in the country.

These boards also carry out and sponsor investigation and research relating to problems of water and air pollution and for their prevention, control or abatement. They also organise, through mass media, a comprehensive mass awareness programme for the same. They also prepare manuals, codes and guidelines relating to treatment and disposal of sewage and trade effluents.

They assess the air quality through regulation of industries. In fact, state boards, through their district level officials, periodically inspect every industry under their jurisdiction to assess the adequacy of treatment measures provided to treat the effluent and gaseous emissions. It also provides background air quality data needed for industrial siting and town planning.

The pollution control boards collect, collate and disseminate technical and statistical data relating to water pollution. They monitor the quality of water in 125 rivers (including the tributaries), wells, lakes, creeks, ponds, tanks, drains and canals.

- Visit a nearby factory/irrigation department and collect the details of measures that they adopt to control water and air pollution.
- You might be seeing advertisements in newspapers, radio and television or billboards in your locality on awareness programmes relating to water and air pollution. Collect a few news-clippings, pamphlets and other information and discuss them in the classroom.

In India, air pollution is widespread in urban areas where vehicles are the major contributors and in a few other areas which have a high concentration of industries and thermal power plants. Vehicular emissions are of particular concern since these are ground level sources and, thus, have the maximum impact on the general population. The number of motor vehicles has increased from about 3 lakh in 1951 to 67 crores in 2003. In 2003, personal transport vehicles (two-wheeled vehicles and cars only) constituted about 80 per cent of the total number of registered vehicles thus contributing significantly to total air pollution load.

India is one of the ten most industrialised nations of the world. But this status has brought with it unwanted and unanticipated consequences such as unplanned urbanisation, pollution and the risk of accidents. The CPCB (Central Pollution

Control Board) has identified seventeen categories of industries (large and medium scale) as significantly polluting.

Work This Out

➢ You can see a column on the measure of air pollution in any national daily. Cut out the news item a week before Diwali, on the day of Diwali and two days after Diwali. Do you observe a significant difference in the value? Discuss in your class.

The above points highlight the challenges to India's environment. The various measures adopted by the Ministry of Environment and the central and state pollution control boards may not yield reward unless we consciously adopt a path of sustainable development. The concern for future generations alone can make development last forever. Development to enhance our current living styles, without concern for posterity, will deplete resources and degrade environment at a pace that is bound to result in both environmental and economic crisis.

9.4. Sustainable Development

Environment and economy are interdependent and need each other. Hence, development that ignores its repercussions on the environment will destroy the environment that sustains life forms. What is needed is sustainable development: development that will allow all future generations to have a potential average quality of life that is at least as high as that which is being enjoyed by the current generation. The concept of sustainable development was emphasised by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), which defined it as: 'Development that meets the need of the present generation without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs'.

Read the definition again. You will notice that the term 'need' and the phrase 'future generations' in the definition are the catch phrases. The use of the concept 'needs' in the definition is linked to distribution of resources. The seminal report — Our Common Future — that gave the above definition explained sustainable development as 'meeting the basic needs of all and extending to all the opportunity to satisfy their aspirations for a better life'. Meeting the needs of all requires redistributing resources and is hence a moral issue. Edward Barbier defined sustainable development as one which is directly concerned with increasing the material standard of living of the poor at the grass root level — this can be quantitatively measured in terms of increased income, real income, educational services, health care, sanitation, water supply etc. In more specific terms, sustainable development aims at decreasing the absolute poverty of the poor by providing lasting and secure livelihoods that minimise resource depletion, environmental

degradation, cultural disruption and social instability. Sustainable development is, in this sense, a development that meets the basic needs of all, particularly the poor majority, for employment, food, energy, water, housing, and ensures growth of agriculture, manufacturing, power and services to meet these needs.

The **Brundtland Commission** emphasises on protecting the future generation. This is in line with the argument of the environmentalists who emphasise that we have a moral obligation to hand over the planet earth in good order to the future generation; that is, the present generation should bequeath a better environment to the future generation. At least we should leave to the next generation a stock of 'quality of life' assets no less than what we have inherited.

The present generation should promote development that enhances the natural and built environment in ways that are compatible with (i) conservation of natural assets (ii) preservation of the regenerative capacity of the world's natural ecological system (iii) avoiding the imposition of added costs or risks on future generations.

According to Herman Daly, a leading environmental economist, to achieve sustainable development, the following needs to be done (i) limiting the human population to a level within the carrying capacity of the environment. The carrying capacity of the environment is like a ' plimsoll line' of the ship which is its load limit mark. In the absence of the plimsoll line for the economy, human scale grows beyond the carrying capacity of the earth and deviates from sustainable development (ii) technological progress should be input efficient and not input consuming (iii) renewable resources should be extracted on a sustainable basis, that is, rate of extraction should not exceed rate of regeneration (iv) for non-renewable resources rate of depletion should not exceed the rate of creation of renewable substitutes and (v) inefficiencies arising from pollution should be corrected.

9.5 Strategies for Sustainable Development

Use of Non-conventional Sources of Energy: India, as you know, is hugely dependent on thermal and hydro power plants to meet its power needs. Both of these have adverse environmental impacts. Thermal power plants emit large quantities of carbon dioxide which is a green house gas. It also produces fly ash which, if not used properly, can cause pollution of water bodies, land and other components of the environment. Hydroelectric projects inundate forests and interfere with the natural flow of water in catchment areas and the river basins. Wind power and solar rays are good examples of conventional but cleaner and greener technologies which can be effectively used to replace thermal and hydro-power.

LPG, Gobar Gas in Rural Areas: Households in rural areas generally use wood, dung cake or other biomass as

fuel. This practice has several adverse implications like deforestation, reduction in green cover, wastage of cattle dung and air pollution. To rectify the situation, subsidised LPG is being provided. In addition, gobar gas plants are being provided through easy loans and subsidy. As far as liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) is concerned, it is a clean fuel — it reduces household pollution to a large extent. Also, energy wastage is minimised. For the gobar gas plant to function, cattle dung is fed to the plant and gas is produced which is used as fuel while the slurry which is left over is a very good organic fertiliser and soil conditioner.

CNG in Urban Areas: In Delhi, the use of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) as fuel in public transport system has significantly lowered air pollution and the air has become cleaner in the last few years.

Work This Out

➢ In Delhi buses and other public transport vehicles use CNG as fuel instead of petrol or diesel; some vehicles use convertible engines; solar energy is being used to light up the streets. What do you think about these changes? Organise a debate in class on the need for sustainable development in India.

Wind Power: In areas where speed of wind is usually high, wind mills can provide electricity without any adverse impact on the environment. Wind turbines move with the wind and electricity is generated. No doubt, the initial cost is high. But the benefits are such that the high cost gets easily absorbed.

Fig.9.4 *Gobar Gas Plant uses cattle dung to produce energy*

Solar Power through Photovoltaic Cells: India is naturally endowed with a large quantity of solar energy in the form of sunlight. We use it in different ways. For example, we dry our clothes, grains, other agricultural products as well as various items made for daily use. We also use sunlight to warm ourselves in winter. Plants use solar energy to perform photosynthesis. Now, with the help of photovoltaic cells, solar energy can be converted into electricity. These cells use special kind of materials to capture solar energy and then convert the energy into electricity. This technology is extremely useful for remote areas and for places where supply of power through grid or power lines is either not possible or proves very costly. This technique is also totally free from pollution.

Mini-hydel Plants: In mountainous regions, streams can be found almost everywhere. A large percentage of such streams are perennial. Mini-hydel plants use the energy of such streams to move small turbines. The turbines generate electricity which can be used locally. Such power plants are more or less environment-friendly as they do not change the land use pattern in areas where they are located; they generate enough power to meet local demands. This means that they can also do away with the need for large scale transmission towers and cables and avoid transmission loss.

Traditional Knowledge and Practices: Traditionally, Indian people have been close to their environment. They have been more a component of the environment and not its controller. If we look back at our agriculture system, healthcare system, housing, transport etc., we find that all practices have been environment friendly. Only recently have we drifted away from the traditional systems and caused large scale damage to the environment and also our rural heritage. Now, it is time to go back. One apt example is in healthcare. India is very much privileged to have about 15,000 species of plants which have medicinal properties. About 8,000 of these are in regular use in various systems of treatment including the folk tradition. With the sudden onslaught of the western system of treatment, we were ignoring our traditional systems such as Ayurveda, Unani, Tibetan and folk systems. These healthcare systems are in great demand again for treating chromic health problems. Now a days every cosmetic produce — hair oil, toothpaste, body lotion, face cream and what not — is herbal in composition. Not only are these products environment friendly, they are relatively free from side effects and do not involve large-scale industrial and chemical processing.

Biocomposting: In our quest to increase agricultural production during the last five decades or so, we almost totally neglected the use of compost and completely switched over to chemical fertilisers. The result is that large tracts of productive land have been adversely affected, water bodies including ground water system have suffered due to chemical contamination

and demand for irrigation has been going up year after year.

Farmers, in large numbers all over the country, have again started using compost made from organic wastes of different types. In certain parts of the country, cattle are maintained only because they produce dung which is an important fertiliser and soil conditioner.

Earthworms can convert organic matter into compost faster than the normal composting process. This process is now being widely used. Indirectly, the civic authorities are benefited too as they have to dispose reduced quantity of waste.

Biopest Control: With the advent of green revolution, the entire country entered into a frenzy to use more and more chemical pesticides for higher yield. Soon, the adverse impacts began to show; food products were contaminated, soil, water bodies and even ground water were polluted with pesticides. Even milk, meat and fishes were found to be contaminated.

To meet this challenge, efforts are on to bring in better methods of pest control. One such step is the use of pesticides based on plant products. Neem trees are proving to be quite useful. Several types of pest controlling chemicals have been isolated from neem and these are being used. Mixed cropping and growing different crops in consecutive years on the same land have also helped farmers.

In addition, awareness is spreading about various animals and birds which help in controlling pests. For example, snakes are one of the prime group of animals which prey upon rats, mice and various other pests. Similarly, large varieties of birds, for example, owls and peacocks, prey upon vermin and pests. If these are allowed to dwell around the agricultural areas, they can clear large varieties of pests including insects. Lizards are also important in this regard. We need to know their value and save them.

Sustainable development has become a catch phrase today. It is 'indeed' a paradigm shift in development thinking. Though it has been interpreted in a number of ways, adherence to this path ensures lasting development and non-declining welfare for all.

9.6 Conclusion

Economic development, which aimed at increasing the production of goods and services to meet the needs of a rising population, puts greater pressure on the environment. In the initial stages of development, the demand for environmental resources was less than that of supply. Now the world is faced with increased demand for environmental resources but their supply is limited due to overuse and misuse. Sustainable development aims at promoting the kind of development that minimises environmental problems and meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs.

Recap

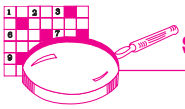
- Environment performs four functions: supplies resources, assimilates wastes, sustains life by providing genetic and bio diversity and provides aesthetic services.
- Population explosion, affluent consumption and production have placed a huge stress on the environment.
- Developmental activities in India have put immense pressure on its finite natural resources, besides creating impact on human health and well-being.
- The threat to India's environment is of two dimensions—threat of poverty induced environmental degradation and the threat of pollution from affluence and a rapidly growing industrial sector.
- Though the government, through various measures, attempts to safeguard the environment, it is also necessary to adopt a path of sustainable development.
- Sustainable development is development that meets the need of the present generation without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs.
- Promotion of natural resources, conservation, preserving regenerative capacity of ecological system and avoiding the imposition of environmental risks on future generations would lead to sustainable development.

EXERCISES

1. What is meant by environment?
2. What happens when the rate of resource extraction exceeds that of their regeneration?
3. Classify the following into renewable and non-renewable resources (i) trees (ii) fish (iii) petroleum (iv) coal (v) iron-ore (vi) water.
4. Two major environmental issues facing the world today are _____ and _____.
5. How do the following factors contribute to the environmental crisis in India? What problem do they pose for the government?
   (i) Rising population
   (ii) Air pollution

(iii) Water contamination
(iv) Affluent consumption standards
(v) Illiteracy
(vi) Industrialisation
(vii) Urbanisation
(viii) Reduction of forest coverage
(ix) Poaching
(x) Global warming.

6. What are the functions of the environment?
7. Identify six factors contributing to land degradation in India.
8. Explain how the opportunity costs of negative environmental impact are high.
9. Outline the steps involved in attaining sustainable development in India.
10. India has abundant natural resources—substantiate the statement.
11. Is environmental crisis a recent phenomenon? If so, why?
12. Give two instances of
    (a) Overuse of environmental resources
    (b) Misuse of environmental resources.
13. State any four pressing environmental concerns of India. Correction for environmental damages involves opportunity costs—explain.
14. Explain the supply-demand reversal of environmental resources.
15. Account for the current environmental crisis.
16. Highlight any two serious adverse environmental consequences of development in India. India's environmental problems pose a dichotomy — they are poverty induced and, at the same time, due to affluence in living standards—is this true?
17. What is sustainable development?
18. Keeping in view your locality, describe any four strategies of sustainable development.
19. Explain the relevance of intergenerational equity in the definition of sustainable development.



SUGGESTED ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

1. Suppose 70 lakh cars are added every year to the roads of metropolitans. Which type of resources do you think are undergoing depletion? Discuss.
2. Make a list of items that can be recycled.

3. Prepare a chart on the causes and remedies of soil erosion in India.
4. How does population explosion contribute to the environmental crisis? Debate in the classroom.
5. The nation has to pay heavily for correcting environmental damages—discuss.
6. A paper factory is to be set up in your village. Arrange a role play consisting of an activist, an industrialist and a group of villagers.

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8

INDIA : CLIMATE, VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE

You read in newspapers daily and watch on T.V. or hear others talking about weather. You must know that **weather** is about *day to day changes* in the atmosphere. It includes changes in temperature, rainfall and sunshine etc. For example, as such it may be hot or cold; sunny or cloudy; windy or calm. You must have noticed that when it is hot continued for several days you don't need any warm clothing. You also like to eat or drink cold things. In contrast there are days together, you feel cold without woollen clothes when it is very windy and chilly, you would like to have something hot to eat.

Broadly, the major seasons recognised in India are:

- Cold Weather Season (Winter) December to February
- Hot Weather Season (Summer) March to May
- Southwest Monsoon Season (Rainy) June to September
- Season of Retreating Monsoon (Autumn) October and November

Cold Weather Season or Winter

During the winter season, cool, dry winds blow from north to the south. The sun rays do not fall directly in the region as a result, the temperatures are quite low in northern India.

Hot Weather Season or Summer

In the hot weather season sun rays more or less directly fall in this region. Temperature becomes very high. Hot and dry winds called ***loo***, blow during the day.

Let's have fun :

1. People in all parts of our country drink delicious cool drinks called *Sharbat* made from fruits available in their regions. They are excellent thirst-quenchers and protect our bodies from the ill-effect of the harsh 'loo'. Have you tried 'Sharbat', made from raw mango, bel, lemon, tamarind, kokum, phalsa, watermelon and buttermilk made from curds; for example chhaachh, mattha, mori, chash, etc? Many make banana and mango milkshakes too.
2. After a hot summer, the first rains bring much joy. All our languages have melodious songs on 'rains'. They sound happy and bring cheer. Learn two songs on rains and sing them together.
   Write or collect five poems on rains.
   Ask your friends, neighbours and family members for names for rains and other seasons in different languages. For instance,
   Varsha – Hindi Pous – Marathi
   Barish – Urdu Borsha – Bengali

South West Monsoon Season or Rainy Season

This season is marked by the onset and advance of monsoon. The winds blow from Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal towards the land. They carry moisture with them. When these winds strike the mountain barriers, rainfall occurs.

Season of Retreating Monsoons or Autumn

Winds move back from the mainland to the Bay of Bengal. This is the season of the retreating monsoons. The southern parts of India, particularly Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh receive rainfall in this season.

However, the **climate** is about the average weather condition, which have been measured *over many years*.

The climate of India has broadly been described as Monsoon type. **Monsoon** is taken from the Arabic word '**mausim**', which means seasons. Due to India's location in the tropical region, most of the rain is brought by monsoon winds. Agriculture in India is dependent on rains. Good monsoons mean adequate rain and a bountiful crop.

What would happen if monsoons were weak, or even worse, failed to occur one year? Tick (✓) the correct answer.

- Crop will be-
  affected/not affected
- The level of the water in a well will-
  come-up/go-down
- Summer will be-
  longer/shorter

Let's Do

On a map of India, locate the places mentioned in the paragraph.

The climate of a place is affected by its **location, altitude, distance from the sea,** and **relief**. Therefore, we experience regional differences in the climate of India. *Jaisalmer* and *Bikaner* in the desert of Rajasthan are *very hot*, while *Drass* and *Kargil* in Jammu and Kashmir are *freezing cold*. *Coastal places* like *Mumbai* and *Kolkata* experience *moderate climate*. They are neither too hot nor too cold. Being on the coast, these places are *very humid*. *Mawsynram* in *Meghalaya* receives the *world's highest rainfall*, while in a particular year it might not rain at all in Jaisalmer in Rajasthan.

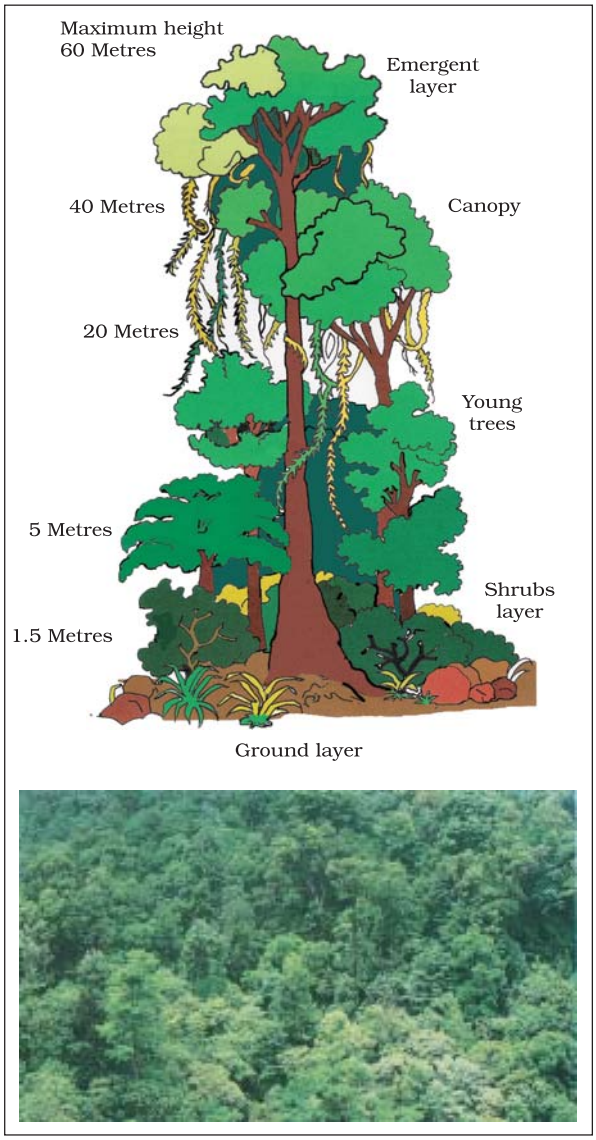


Figure 8.1 : Tropical Rain Forests

Natural Vegetation

We see a variety of plant life in our surroundings. How nice it is to play in a field with green grasses. There are also small plants called bushes and shrubs like cactus and flowering plants etc. Besides there are many tall trees some with many branches and leaves like neem, mango or some which stand with few leaves such as palm. The grasses, shrubs and trees, which grow on their own without interference or help from human beings are called natural vegetation. Do you wonder how these differ from each other. Different types of natural vegetation are dependent on different climatic conditions, among which the amount of rainfall is very important.

Due to varied climatic conditions, India has a wide range of natural vegetation. Vegetation of India can be divided into five types – Tropical evergreen forest, Tropical deciduous forest, Thorny bushes, Mountain vegetation and Mangrove forests.

Tropical Rain Forest

Tropical Rain Forests occur in the areas which receive heavy rainfall. They are so dense that sunlight doesn't reach the ground. Many species of trees are found in these forests, which shed their leaves at different times of the

year. As a result, they always appear green and are called evergreen forest look at the Figure 8.1. Important trees found in these forests are *mahogany, ebony and rosewood*. Andaman and Nicobar Islands, parts of North-Eastern states and a narrow strip of the Western slope of the Western Ghats are home of these forests.

Tropical Deciduous Forests

In a large part of our country we have this type of forest. These forests are also called monsoon forests. They are less dense. They *shed* their leaves at a particular time of the year. Important trees of these forests are *sal, teak, peepal, neem and shisham*. They are found in Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, and in parts of Maharashtra.

Figure 8.2 : Tropical Deciduous Forests

Thorny Bushes

This type of vegetation is found in dry areas of the country. The leaves are in the form of spines to reduce the loss of water. *Cactus, khair, babool, keekar* are important and are found in the states of Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Eastern slopes of Western Ghats and Gujarat.

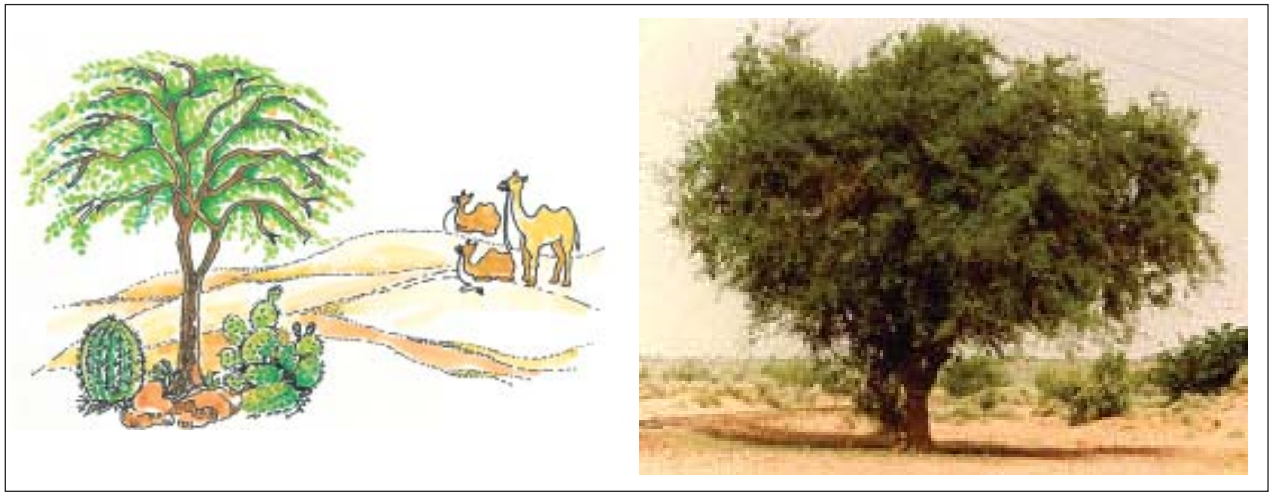


Figure 8.3 : Thorny Bushes

Mountain Vegetation

A wide range of species is found in the mountains according to the variation in height. With increase in height, the temperature falls. At a height between 1500

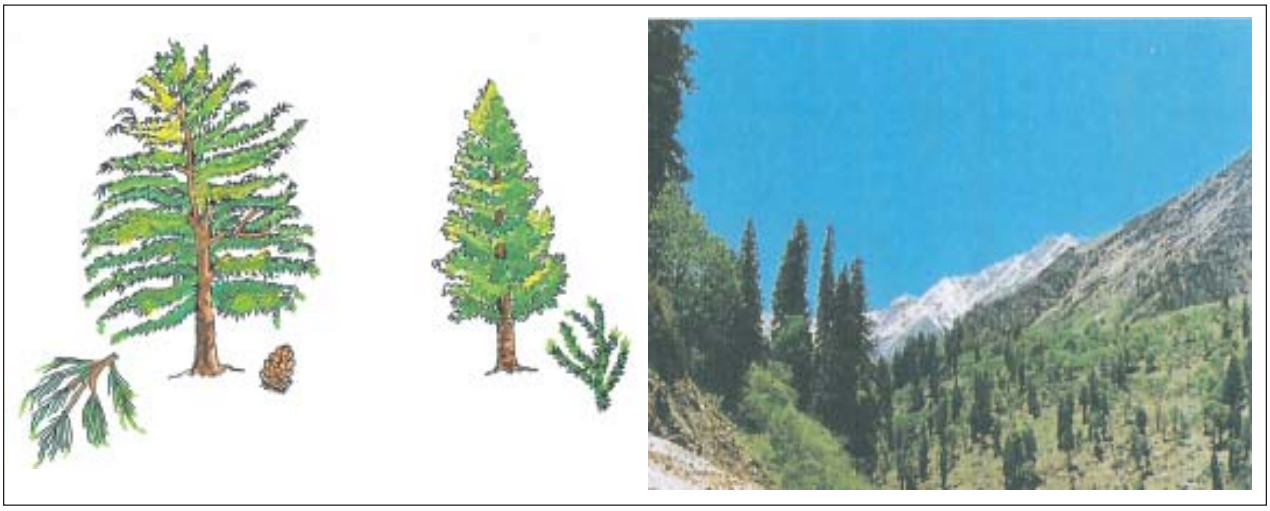


Figure 8.4 : Mountain Vegetation

Figure 8.5 : Mangrove Vegetation

metres and 2500 metres most of the trees are conical in shape. These trees are called coniferous trees. *Chir, Pine and Deodar* are important trees of these forests.

Mangrove Forests

These forests can survive in *saline water*. They are found mainly in *Sunderbans* in

West Bengal and in the *Andaman and Nicobar Islands*. *Sundari* is a well-known species of trees in mangrove forests after which *Sunderbans* have been named.

Why are Forests Necessary?

Forests are very useful for us. They perform various functions. Plants release oxygen that we breathe and absorb *carbon dioxide*. The roots of the plants bind the soil; thus, they control soil erosion.

Forests provide us with timber for furniture, fuel wood, fodder, medicinal plants and herbs, lac, honey, gum, etc.

Forests are the natural habitat of wild life.

Natural vegetation has been destroyed to a large extent because of the reckless cutting of trees. We should plant more trees and protect the existing ones and make people aware of the importance of trees. We can have special programmes like *Van Mahotsav* to involve more people in making our earth green.

Leela's parents planted a sapling of "neem" to celebrate her birth. On each birthday, a different sapling was planted. It was watered regularly and protected from severe heat, cold and animals. Children took care not to harm it. When Leela was 20, twenty-one beautiful trees, stood in and around her house. Birds built their nests on them, flowers bloomed, butterflies fluttered around them, children enjoyed their fruits, swung on their branches and played in their shade.

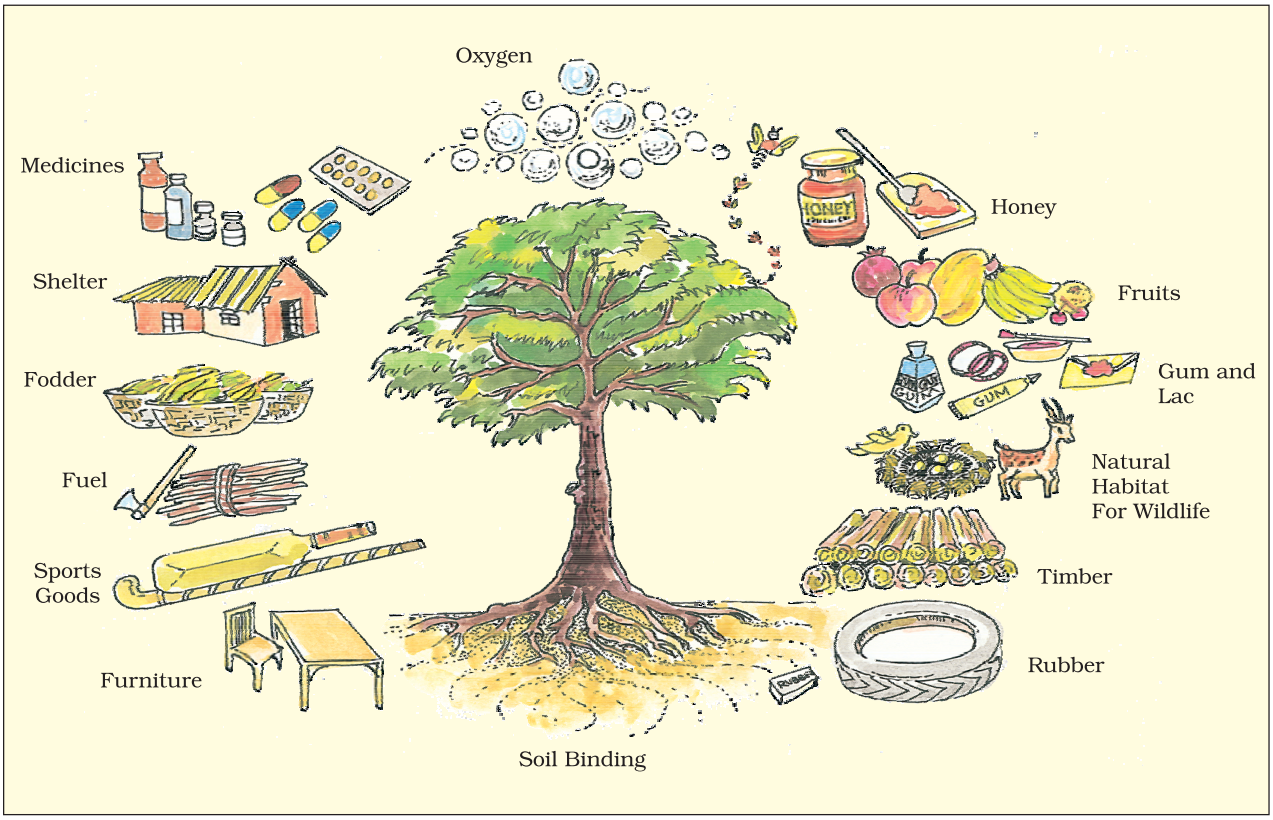


Figure 8.6 : Uses of Forests

Wild Life

Forests are home to a variety of wild life. There are thousands of species of animals and a large variety of reptiles, amphibians, mammals, birds, insects and worms which dwell in the forest.

Figure 8.7 : Wildlife

The tiger is our **national animal**. It is found in various parts of the country. *Gir* forest in Gujarat is the home of Asiatic lions. Elephants and one-horned rhinoceroses roam in the forests of Assam. Elephants are also found in Kerala and Karnataka. Camels and wild asses are found in the the Great Indian desert and the Rann of Kuchchh. Wild goats, snow leopards, bears, etc. are found in the Himalayan region. Besides these, many other animals are found in our country such as monkey, wolf, jackal, nilgai, cheetal, etc.

India is equally rich in bird life. The peacock is our **national bird**. Other common birds are parrots, pigeons, mynah, geese, bulbul and ducks. There are several bird sanctuaries which have been created to give birds their natural habitat. These provide the birds protection from hunters. Can you name five birds that are commonly found in your area?

There are several hundreds of species of snakes found in India. Cobras and kraits are important among them.

Due to cutting of forests and hunting, several species of wildlife of India are declining rapidly. Many species have already become extinct.

In order to protect them many national parks, sanctuaries and biosphere reserves have been set up. The Government has also started *Project Tiger* and *Project Elephant* to protect these animals. Can you name some wildlife sanctuaries of India and locate them on a map?

You can also contribute in conserving wildlife. You can refuse to buy things made from parts of the bodies of animals such as their bones, horns, fur, skins, and feathers. Every year we observe wildlife week in the first week of October, to create awareness of conserving the habitats of the animal kingdom.

Largescale poaching alleged in Simlipal reserve

By Arun Kumar Das/TNN

New Delhi: Yet another tiger sanctuary appears headed the Sariska way. Though officially there are 101 tigers in Orissa's Similipal reserve, sightings have dropped to five this year, raising fears of largescale poaching in the state's largest tiger sanctuary.

Not only are fewer tigers visible, villagers have also stopped complaining about cattle kills by the jungle cats. There are 64 villages with 4 lakh residents in the areas surrounding Similipal and 12,000 people live inside the sanctuary area.

Apart from tigers, the 2,750-sq-km sanctuary is home to 127 leopards, 465 elephants and hundreds of bison, barking deer, sambar and wild boars.

Park records say there were 13 tiger sightings in 2003. The figure dropped to 7 in 2004.

Jitendra Kumar, district forest officer, Baripada, who is also in-charge of Similipal, insists low sightings don't translate to fewer tigers.

"Because it is a different terrain here. There are seven rivers passing through the forest and about 500 water bodies and falls in the forest. There is no shortage of food or water in the forest, so tigers don't go for human or cattle killings," he said.

Visitors, Kumar says, don't have the patience to wait for tigers as they are always in hurry.

"Unlike other sanctuaries, there is no fixed tiger spot here. So, one has to wait patiently in different places in the core areas. So far, we have not come across any evidence of poaching in the forest."

Admitting the unrest [illegible]

IS ORISSA'S SIMLIPAL RESERVE HEADING THE SARISKA W.

partment official said lack of cattle kills was intriguing and hoped new sophisticated census methods would be more accurate.

In the case of Sariska and Ranthambore, two of the more important tiger reserves in India, previous census reports were either found to be exaggerated or completely wrong. Biswajit Mohanty of the Wildlife Society of Orissa, which monitors the Similipal tiger population, says claims of the authorities aren't valid and circumstantial evidence suggests otherwise.

"Unlike in elephant poaching, where the poacher leaves behind the carcass, the tiger poachers [illegible]

"Because right from t nails, eyes, toes, teeth, t thing is sold. There were s of leopards and tiger s the last four months in (no poaching cases were re he said.

According to Wildlife T dia vice-chairman Ashc who has moved a PIL in th Court challenging officia tiger figures, "The numb is not more than 30 as per mation. It is true that the ty of water bodies in the and it is also a dense f [illegible]

Will Centre, wildlife lovers finally kiss and make up?

By Chandrika Mago/TNN

New Delhi: The country's new di- the function.

This certainly doesn't mean the two sides have kissed and made up.

Big cats vanishing from Uttaranchal

By Jaskiran Chopra/TNN

Debra Dun: Uttaranchal, has remained the same since 2003 (58 tigers). However, in the buffer zone there are now 30 tigers compared to 27 in 2003. The Sonanadi Wildlife S has also a part of tigers. the number of CTR. the number of has gone up from 14 According to the 165 tigers are in areas while forest areas. U

More Sariskas in the making

By Chandrika Mago/TNN

New Delhi: There could be many more Sariskas in the making — and this is official. If tourism could see tigers loping away from Rajasthan's famous Ranthambore reserve, "extremist-engineered disturbances" have taken an unaccounted toll on five other reserves.

India is supposed to have about 3,500 tigers but nobody believes the figure, just as nobody is quite sure of the scale of poaching. Over the past year or so, Project Tiger officials have been mapping traditional tiger ranges across the country to detail the changes and strategise accordingly. This is an attempt to put management on a scientific footing — unstated acknowledgement that it hasn't been so far.

As the PM will hear at an upcoming National Board for Wildlife meeting, the traditional range has been mapped on the basis of literature references. Then, they have gone down to the taluka level for actual sightings. They find the habitat is fragmented but the Terai, Western Ghats and central India are still not 'too bad'.

The [illegible]

ter of all sightings in and outside reserves. States, however, are the decisive factor in every reserve.

When the next tiger census begins November, the ministry plans to [illegible]

Gopal says the tourist crush at Ranthambore has pushed out tigers to villages nearby and animals have been sighted close to the Chambal ravines. At least one person's death has been reported.

In the Valmiki reserve, a disputed area has seen Nepalese extremists lording it there. Four years ago, tiger reserve staff which reportedly hadn't been paid salaries for nearly 16-18 months just walked out in protest one day. Army patrolling has reportedly been sought there.

Other reserves in the problem list are Indravati in Chhattisgarh, Manas in Assam, Nagarjuna Sagar in Andhra and Palamau in Jharkhand. "Some reserves are so disturbed you can forget about the tiger," says additional DG (wildlife) R P S Kanwal.

Law and order is just a piece of [illegible] puzzle. A deadly cocktail has been [illegible] ing in reserves as the territo- [illegible] sessive tiger loses its range, [illegible] humans trample ground in dis- [illegible] its right to privacy, poachers ma- [illegible] governments go slow on [illegible] hands of vacancies of [illegible] — the ill-armed men who ac- [illegible] posed to be a protective co- [illegible] un ageing force.

There in between, officials an- [illegible] tionists say officialdom has [illegible] with the locals, who are best [illegible] about the movements of both [illegible] nd poachers.

Cramped in Gir, lions pine for grassland

By Himanshu Kaushik/TNN

Villages in tiger reserves must be relocated'

There is no other alternative to the situation. Both relocation and coexistence need to be highlighted and the PM agrees with us on the issue. Our report clearly states that, in the last 30 years, only 80-odd villages have [illegible]

We have recommended the setting up of a crime bureau because it is important that we find a way to help coordinate with the state. The wildlife crime bureau needs to be set up immediately under the ministry of [illegible]

STRAIGHT ANSWERS

Q How did the PM react to the suggestions of the task force?

The PM reacted in a positive manner. We had made seven recommendations in our report and the PM accepted all of them.

Which recommendation needs to be [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

portant, the plan f relocation of village [illegible] tiers within a year

SUNITA NARAIN
Chairman, Tiger Task Force
On the panel's meeting with

Tiger crisis: Have we done enough to check poaching?

Task force begins two-day meet

By Chandrika Mago/TNN

New Delhi: India's seriousness in saving its wildlife will be judged internationally by how quickly it can put in place one specialised agency to act against poachers.

It promised to do so six years ago, it still hasn't and this has created a situation which criminals are exploiting.

[illegible] the message coming out [illegible] enforcement

doesn't threaten their survival.

China has been trying to communicate information to India on seizures but there is no one agency here which can act on it, go out and investigate, CITES senior enforcement officer John Sellar said on Wednesday. Trying to coordinate with India is almost impossible. Trying to understand the maze of Centre-state relations, Seller knows one thing: If criminals move from one state to another here, there is no specialised [illegible] them nationally [illegible] crimi-

tiger numbers dropping rapidly. In some cases, seizures are beginning to drop off — a sign that the trade may have come down or, more worryingly, that there may be nothing left to trade.

In contrast to India, China — a "very significant" destination — seems to be doing much better, by CITES standards. Certain places in China are a destination for the illegal trade in tiger parts and skins — sometimes for local use, sometimes in a transit point, with tiger skins making their way to West Asia. China has imposed extremely severe penalties in some cases — even the death penalty.

CITES' message is clear: If India [illegible] really wants to save its [illegible] [illegible] out in place a [illegible] [illegible] tiger counts and how to

Since that assessment, the famous Sariska reserve in Rajasthan seems to have lost all its tigers.

"The crisis has been building [illegible] Since 2002, major [illegible] [illegible]

Times News Network

New Delhi: The Prime Minister-appointed tiger task force is meeting over two days in the Capital, consulting activists, scientists, even CBI officials.

On Wednesday, the members sat from 9 am to 9 pm, hearing out CBI officials, a representative from the international Convention on CITES as well as Indian and foreign wildlife activists through a group discussion which saw some fur fly but issues come out in the open. Thursday is the day for scientists — with a greater

etshad: Is claustrophobia [illegible] ulatic lion out of its natural [illegible] ir? Experts say the good [illegible] r the last few years have [illegible] rainah grassland into a Ser- [illegible] a coalition tahoosnabh [illegible] s. [illegible] f the jungle. [illegible] Records show 15 lions [illegible] ver the last census, had [illegible] this year. Unofficially, [illegible] cials mapped the pr [illegible] during the census. [illegible] find out that lions [illegible] ing in human hal [illegible] ber of those kil [illegible] the Gir sanctu [illegible] sanctuary [illegible] which G [illegible] of the [illegible] Gir [illegible] jun

- Why do poachers kill tigers?
- What will happen if tigers vanish from our forests?
- Have you ever visited any tiger reserves or a zoo where tigers are kept?

Migratory Birds

Some birds migrate to our country in the winter season every year such as Pelican, Siberian Crane, Stork, Flamingo, Pintail Duck, Curlew. Siberian Cranes migrate from Siberia; they arrive in December and stay till early march.

Stork – a migratory bird

EXERCISES

1. Answer the following questions briefly.

(a) Which winds bring rainfall in India? Why is it so important?

(b) Name the different seasons in India.

(c) What is natural vegetation?

(d) Name the different types of vegetation found in India.

(e) What is the difference between evergreen forest and deciduous forest?

(f) Why is tropical rainforest also called evergreen forest?

2. Tick the correct answers.

(a) The world's highest rainfall occurs in

(i) Mumbai (ii) Asansol (iii) Mawsynram

(b) Mangrove forests can thrive in

(i) saline water (ii) fresh water (iii) polluted water

(c) Mahogany and rosewood trees are found in

(i) mangrove forests

(ii) tropical deciduous forests

(iii) tropical evergreen forests

(d) Wild goat and snow leopards are found in

(i) Himalayan region

(ii) Peninsular region

(iii) Gir forests

(e) During the south west monsoon period, the moisture laden winds blow from

(i) land to sea (ii) sea to land (iii) plateau to plains

3. Fill in the blanks.

(a) Hot and dry winds known as _____ blow during the day in the summers.

(b) The states of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu receive a great amount of rainfall during the season of_____.

(c) _____ forest in Gujarat is the home of _____.

(d) _____ is a well-known species of mangrove forests.

(e) _____ are also called mansoon forests.

For Fun

1. Make a list of trees in your surroundings and collect the pictures of plants, animals and birds and paste them in your copy.
2. Plant a sapling near your home and nurture it and write down the changes you observe for a few months.
3. Does any migratory bird come in your locality? Try to idenfity that. Be watchful in winter season.
4. Visit a zoo in your city or visit a nearby forest or sanctuary with your elders. Watch various types of wildlife there.

1 Environment

After the long vacation, when Ravi started going to school again, he noticed that the only playground next to his school was dug up. People said that a huge building with many flats will be constructed there. Ravi was almost in tears, when he realised that the big playground with its soft grass, marigolds and butterflies is gone for ever. He shared his feelings with his classmates. In the assembly, the Principal too sadly observed, "See how our environment is changing."

In the class Ravi asked his teacher, "What is environment?" "Whatever you see in your surroundings," said the teacher.

Ravi thought aloud, "That means, the school building, tables, chairs in the classroom, even that open field, the road, the garbage, my friends – all are parts of our environment"!

"Yes" said the teacher, "but wait..... Some objects are created by nature – for example, mountains, rivers, trees, animals. Others are made by people – for example roads, cars, clothes, books".

Now work in pairs. Make a list with your classmate sitting next to you, of the creations of nature and by human beings.

Ravi, Paramjeet, Jessy, Mustafa, Asha were all excited about making the list. "Why is our environment changing?" asked Iqbal. "It's all because of our needs. They are

Environment is our basic life support system. It provides the air we breath, the water we drink, the food we eat and the land where we live.

How do human beings modify this natural environment? The car fumes pollute the air, water is collected in a pot, food is served in vessels and land is used to build factories.

Human beings make cars, mills, factories and manufacture containers. This is how human beings modify natural environment.

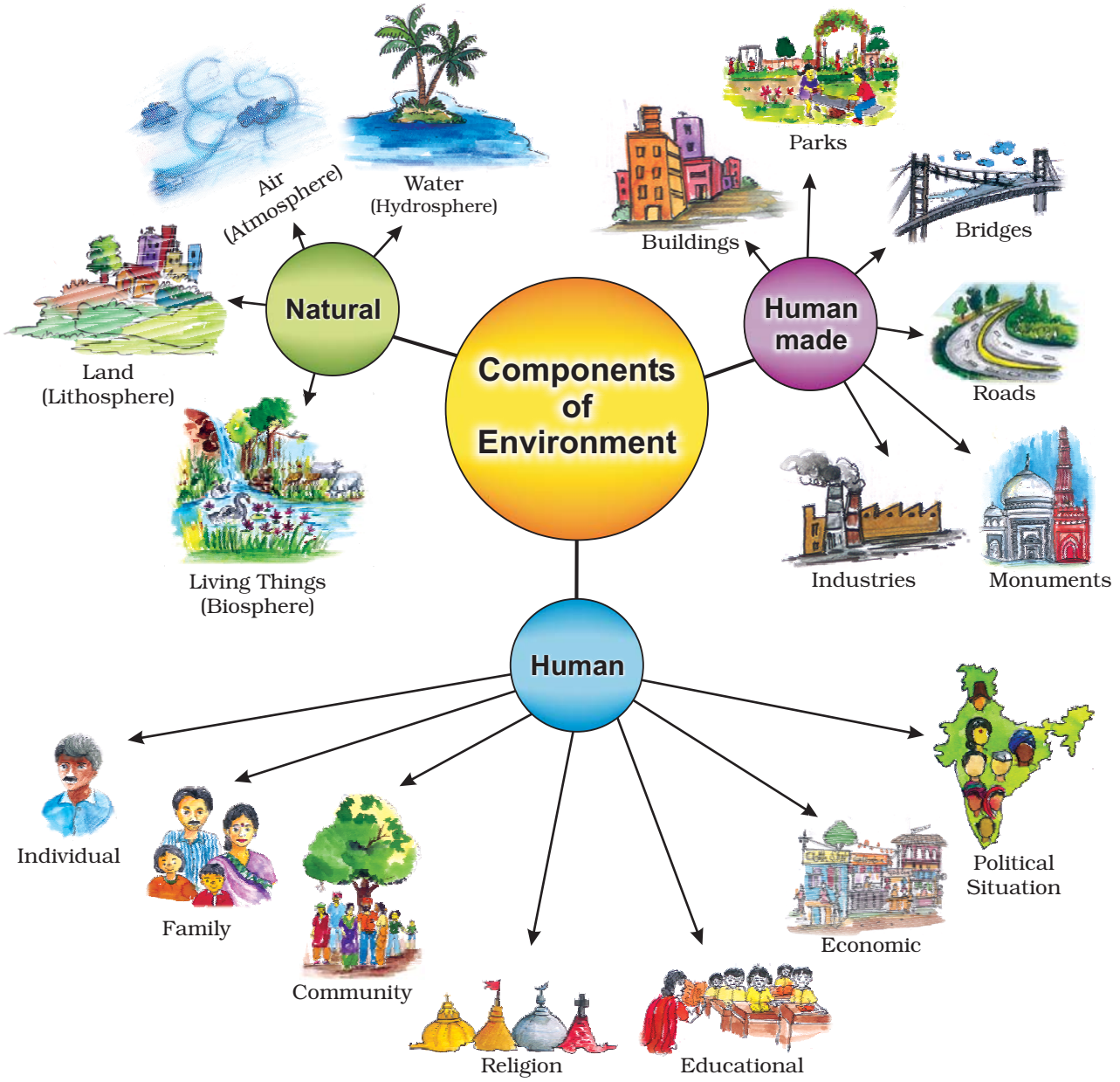


Fig. 1.1: Components of Environment

increasing day by day; we are therefore modifying and at times even destroying our natural surroundings", the teacher replied.

Biotic
The world of living organisms. e.g. plants and animals.

Abiotic
The world of non-living elements. e.g. land.

From the above conversation you understand that the place, people, things and nature that surround any living organism is called **environment**. It is a combination of natural and human made phenomena. While the natural environment refers to both **biotic** and **abiotic** conditions existing on the earth,

human environment reveals the activities, creations and interactions among human beings.

Natural Environment

Land, water, air, plants and animals comprise the natural environment. You are familiar with the meaning of lithosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere and biosphere from your previous class. Let us learn some more facts about these domains.

Lithosphere is the solid crust or the hard top layer of the earth. It is made up of rocks and minerals and covered by a thin layer of soil. It is an irregular surface with various landforms such as mountains, plateaus, plains, valleys, etc. Landforms are found over the continents and also on the ocean floors.

Lithosphere is the domain that provides us forests, grasslands for grazing, land for agriculture and human settlements. It is also a source of mineral wealth.

Fig. 1.2: Domains of the Environment

The domain of water is referred to as **hydrosphere**. It comprises various sources of water and different types of water bodies like rivers, lakes, seas, oceans, etc. It is essential for all living organisms.

The **atmosphere** is the thin layer of air that surrounds the earth. The gravitational force of the earth holds the atmosphere around it. It protects us

Word Origin

Environment: French word "Environer/ Environner" meaning "neighbourhood".

Let's do

Look at your surroundings. Make a list of uses that the land in your neighbourhood is being put to.

Let's do

Where does the water you use in your home and school come from? Make a list of different uses of water in our daily life. Have you seen anyone wasting water? How?

Let's do

Observe the sky while coming to school. Make a note whether the day is cloudy, rainy, sunny, foggy etc.

Glossary

Ecosystem: It is a system formed by the interaction of all living organisms with each other and with the physical and chemical factors of the environment in which they live, all linked by transfer of energy and material.

Let's do

Sketch or bring photographs of your place like the students in the story.

from the harmful rays and scorching heat of the sun. It consists of a number of gases, dust and water vapour. The changes in the atmosphere produce changes in the weather and climate.

Plant and animal kingdom together make **biosphere** or the living world. It is a narrow zone of the earth where land, water and air interact with each other to support life.

What is ecosystem?

At an NCC camp that Ravi's class was attending, Jessy exclaimed, "What a heavy downpour. It reminds me of my home in Kerala. You should come and see how it pours and pours and pours over the lush green fields and coconut plantations."

Heera from Jaisalmer exclaimed, "We get no rains. We see only 'kikar' and sand, as far as the eyes can see." "But you also find camels", said Ravi.

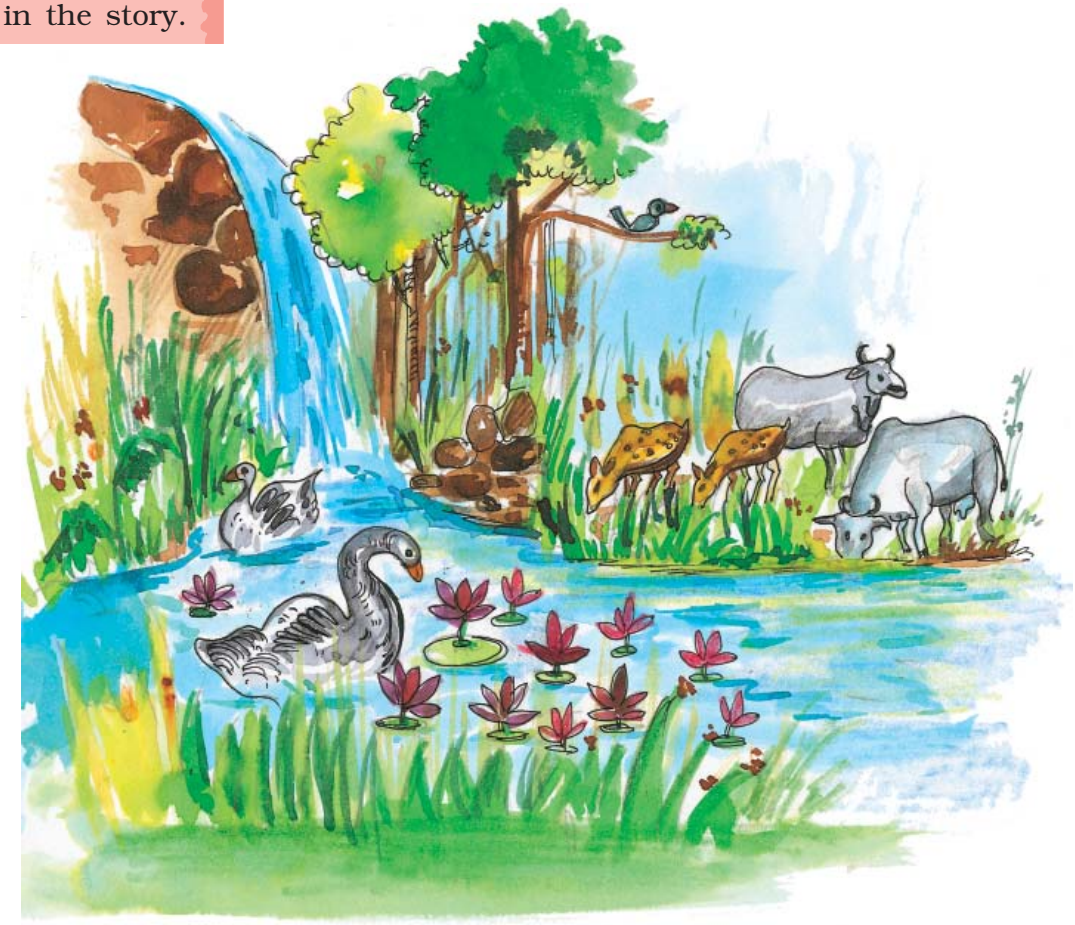


Fig. 1.3: *A Pond Ecosystem*

Heera says, "Not just camels. If you visit our desert, you will see snakes, lizards and many insects too."

Ravi wondered, "Why do the animals, the vegetation and the way people live vary from place to place? Are they all related to each other?"

"Oh yes, very much so", the teacher replied.

All plants, animals and human beings depend on their immediate surroundings. Often they are also interdependent on each other. This relation between the living organisms, as well as the relation between the organisms and their surroundings form an ecosystem. There could be an ecosystem of large rain forest, grassland, desert, mountains, lake, river, ocean and even a small pond.

Do you think the park in which Ravi and his friends played formed an ecosystem?

Human Environment

Human beings interact with the environment and modify it according to their need. Early humans adapted themselves to the natural surroundings. They led a simple life and fulfilled their requirements from the nature around them. With time needs grew and became more varied. Humans learn new ways to use and change environment. They learn to grow crops, domesticate animals and lead a settled life. The wheel was invented, surplus food was produced, barter system emerged, trade started and commerce developed. Industrial revolution enabled large scale production. Transportation became faster. Information revolution made communication easier and speedy across the world.

Have you ever thought why you love eating a juicy watermelon in summer and hot roasted peanuts in winter? A perfect balance is necessary between the natural and human environment. Humans must learn to live and use their environment in a harmonious way.

Nurie, a girl from Mizoram from Ravi's class often talks about the lush green surroundings of her place. Seeing Ravi upset at having lost his playground, Nurie invited him to visit her home state during the coming vacation. Ravi's teacher asked the students to draw the landscape, houses and activities of the people and places they visit during the holidays.

Do you know?

On 5 June every year World Environment Day is celebrated.

Glossary

Barter System: It is a trade in which goods are exchanged without the use of money.

Let's do

Talk to some elderly person in your neighbourhood and collect information about–

- The trees in his/ her neighbourhood when he/ she was your age.
- The indoor games he/she played.
- His/her favourite fruit at your age.
- How did they make themselves comfortable during hot summers and cold winters?

Display your answers on a wall/bulletin board.

1. Answer the following questions.

(i) What is an ecosystem?

(ii) What do you mean by natural environment?

(iii) Which are the major components of the environment?

(iv) Give four examples of human made environment.

(v) What is lithosphere?

(vi) Which are the two major components of biotic environment?

(vii) What is biosphere?

2. Tick the correct answer.

(i) Which is not a natural ecosystem?

(a) Desert (b) Aquarium (c) Forest

(ii) Which is not a component of human environment?

(a) Land (b) Religion (c) Community

(iii) Which is a human made environment?

(a) Mountain (b) Sea (c) Road

(iv) Which is a threat to environment?

(a) Growing plant

(b) Growing population

(c) Growing crops

3. Match the following.

(i) Biosphere	(a) blanket of air which surrounds the earth
(ii) Atmosphere	(b) domain of water
(iii) Hydrosphere	(c) our surroundings
(iv) Environment	(d) narrow zone where land water and air interact

4. Give reasons.

(i) Man modifies his environment

(ii) Plants and animals depend on each other

5. Activity.

Imagine an ideal environment where you would love to live. Draw the picture of your ideal environment.

2 Inside Our Earth

The earth, our homeland is a dynamic planet. It is constantly undergoing changes inside and outside. Have you ever wondered what lies in the interior of the earth? What is the earth made up of?

Interior of the Earth

Just like an onion, the earth is made up of several concentric layers with one inside another (Fig. 2.1). The uppermost layer over the earth's surface is called the **crust**. It is the thinnest of all the layers. It is about 35 km. on the continental masses and only 5 km. on the ocean floors.

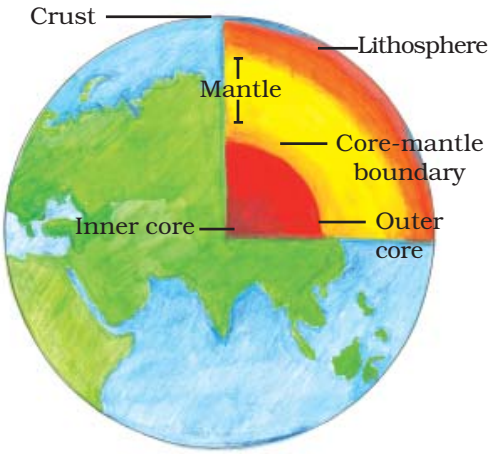


Fig. 2.1: Interior of the Earth

The main mineral constituents of the continental mass are **silica** and **alumina**. It is thus called **sial** *(si*-silica and *al*-alumina*)*. The oceanic crust mainly consists of silica and magnesium; it is therefore called **sima** (*si*-silica and *ma*-magnesium) (Fig. 2.2).

Just beneath the crust is the mantle which extends up to a depth of 2900 km. below the crust.

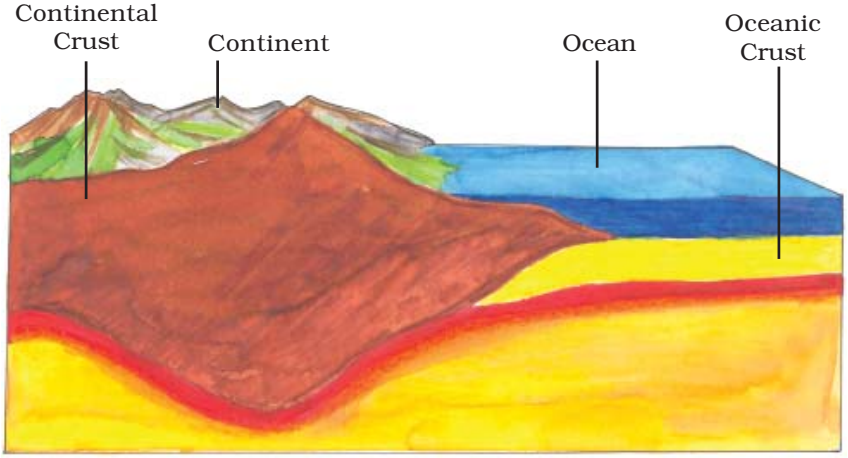


Fig. 2.2: Continental Crust and Oceanic Crust

Do you know?

- The deepest mine in the world, is in South Africa. It is about 4 km. deep. In search for oil engineers have dug a hole about 6 km. deep.
- To reach to the centre of the earth (which is not possible!) you will have to dig a hole 6000 km. deep on the ocean floor.

Do you know?

- The crust forms only 0.5 per cent of the volume of the earth, 16 per cent consists of the mantle and 83 per cent makes the core.
- The radius of the earth is 6371 km.

Word Origin

Igneous: Latin word Ignis meaning fire.

Sedimentary: Latin word sedimentum meaning settle down.

Metamorphic: Greek word metamorphose meaning change of form.

Glossary

Fossils: The remains of the dead plants and animals trapped in the layers of rocks are called fossils.

The innermost layer is the core with a radius of about 3500 km. It is mainly made up of nickel and iron and is called **nife** (*ni* – nickel and *fe* – ferrous i.e. iron). The central core has very high temperature and pressure.

Rocks and Minerals

The earth's crust is made up of various types of rocks. Any natural mass of mineral matter that makes up the earth's crust is called a **rock**. Rocks can be of different colour, size and texture.

There are three major types of rocks: **igneous rocks**, **sedimentary rocks** and **metamorphic rocks**.

When the molten magma cools, it becomes solid. Rocks thus formed are called igneous rocks. They are also called **primary rocks**. There are two types of igneous rocks: **intrusive rocks** and **extrusive rocks**.

Can you imagine lava coming out from the volcanoes? Lava is actually fiery red molten magma coming out from the interior of the earth on its surface. When this molten lava comes on the earth's surface, it rapidly cools down and becomes solid. Rocks formed in such a way on the **crust** are called **extrusive igneous rocks**. They have a very fine grained structure. For example, basalt. The Deccan plateau is made up of basalt rocks. Sometimes the molten magma cools down deep inside the earth's crust. Solid rocks so formed are called **intrusive igneous rocks**. Since they cool down slowly they form large grains. Granite is an example of such a rock. Grinding stones used to prepare paste/powder of spices and grains are made of granite.

Rocks roll down, crack, and hit each other and are broken down into small fragments. These smaller particles are called **sediments**. These sediments are transported and deposited by wind, water, etc. These loose sediments are compressed and hardened to form layers of rocks. These types of rocks are called **sedimentary rocks**. For example, sandstone is made from grains of sand. These rocks may also contain fossils of plants, animals and other micro-organisms that once lived on them.

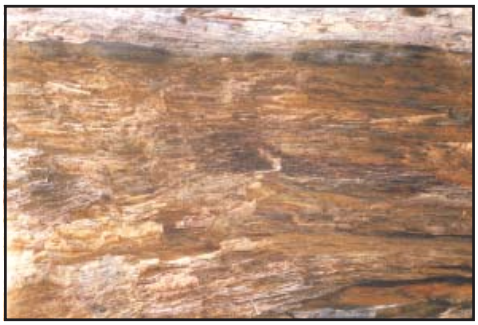


Fig. 2.3: Sedimentary rock turned into a Metamorphic rock

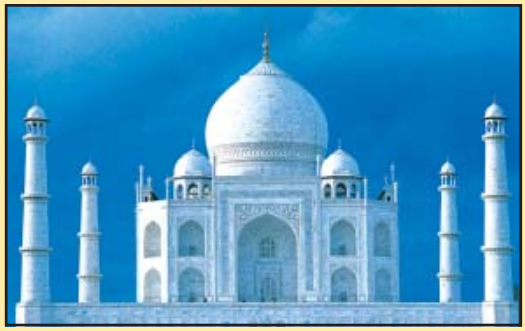
Igneous and sedimentary rocks can change into metamorphic rocks under great heat and pressure (Fig. 2.3). For example, clay changes into slate and limestone into marble.

Rocks are very useful to us. The hard rocks are used for making roads, houses and buildings. You use stones in many games. For example, seven stones (*pitthoo*), hop-scotch (*stapu/kit kit*), five stones (*gitti*). Find out some more such games by asking your grand parents, parents, neighbours, etc.

Let's do

Collect pictures of some monuments and find out which are the rocks used to build them. Two pictures have been collected for you.

The Red Fort is made of red sandstone



The Taj Mahal is made of white marble

You will be surprised to know that one type of rock changes to another type under certain conditions in a cyclic manner. This process of transformation of the rock from one to another is known as the **rock cycle**. You have already learnt when the molten magma cools; it solidifies to become igneous rock. These igneous rocks are broken down into small particles that are transported and deposited to form sedimentary rocks. When the igneous and sedimentary rocks are subjected to heat and pressure they change into metamorphic rocks. The metamorphic rocks which are still under great heat and pressure melt down to form molten magma. This molten magma again can cool down and solidify into igneous rocks (Fig. 2.4).

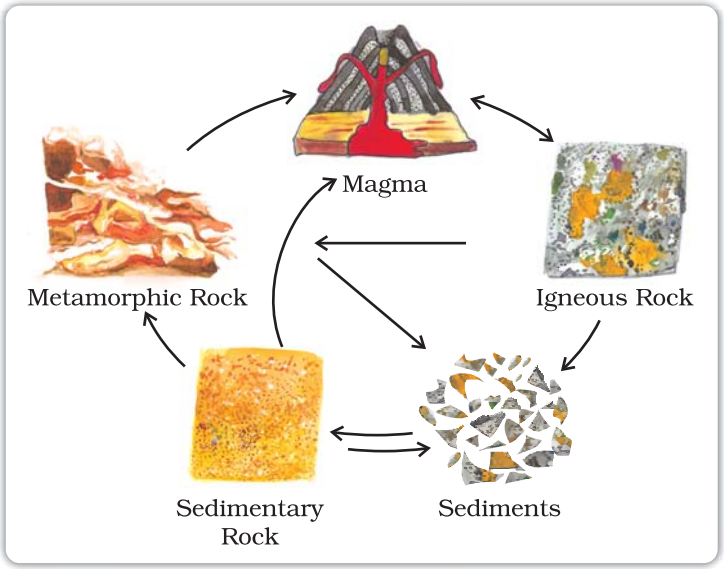


***Fig. 2.4:** Rock Cycle*

What are the minerals found in your state?

Collect some samples to show in your class.

Rocks are made up of different minerals. Minerals are naturally occurring substances which have certain physical properties and definite chemical composition. Minerals are very important to humankind. Some are used as fuels. For example, coal, natural gas and petroleum. They are also used in industries – iron, aluminium, gold, uranium, etc, in medicine, in fertilisers, etc.

1. Answer the following questions.

(i) What are the three layers of the earth?

(ii) What is a rock?

(iii) Name three types of rocks.

(iv) How are extrusive and intrusive rocks formed?

(v) What do you mean by a rock cycle?

(vi) What are the uses of rocks?

(vii) What are metamorphic rocks?

2. Tick the correct answer.

(i) The rock which is made up of molten magma is

(a) Igneous (b) Sedimentary (c) Metamorphic

(ii) The innermost layer of the earth is

(a) Crust (b) Core (c) Mantle

(iii) Gold, petroleum and coal are examples of

(a) Rocks (b) Minerals (c) Fossils

(iv) Rocks which contain fossils are

(a) Sedimentary rocks

(b) Metamorphic rocks

(c) Igneous rocks

(v) The thinnest layer of the earth is

(a) Crust (b) Mantle (c) Core

3. Match the following.

(i) Core	(a) Changes into slate
(ii) Minerals	(b) Used for roads and buildings
(iii) Rocks	(c) Made of silicon and alumina
(iv) Clay	(d) Has definite chemical composition
(v) Sial	(e) Innermost layer

4. Give reasons.

(i) We cannot go to the centre of the earth.

(ii) Sedimentary rocks are formed from sediments.

(iii) Limestone is changed into marble.

5. For fun.

(i) What are the minerals most commonly used in the following objects?

(ii) Identify some more objects made up of different minerals.

3 Our Changing Earth

Activity

Take a small coloured paper pellet and put it in a beaker half filled with water. Place the beaker on a tripod stand and heat it. As the water warms up, you will observe that the paper pellet is moving upward along with the warm layers of water and then sinks back along with the cooler layers of water. The molten magma inside the earth moves in a similar manner.

Glossary

Lithospheric plates: The earth's crust consists of several large and some small, rigid, irregularly-shaped plates (slabs) which carry continents and the ocean floor.

The lithosphere is broken into a number of plates known as the **Lithospheric plates**. You will be surprised to know that these plates move around very slowly – just a few millimetres each year. This is because of the movement of the molten magma inside the earth. The molten magma inside the earth moves in a circular manner as shown in the activity.

The movement of these plates causes changes on the surface of the earth. The earth movements are divided on the basis of the forces which cause them. The forces which act in the interior of the earth are called as **Endogenic forces** and the forces that work on the surface of the earth are called as **Exogenic forces** (Fig. 3.1).

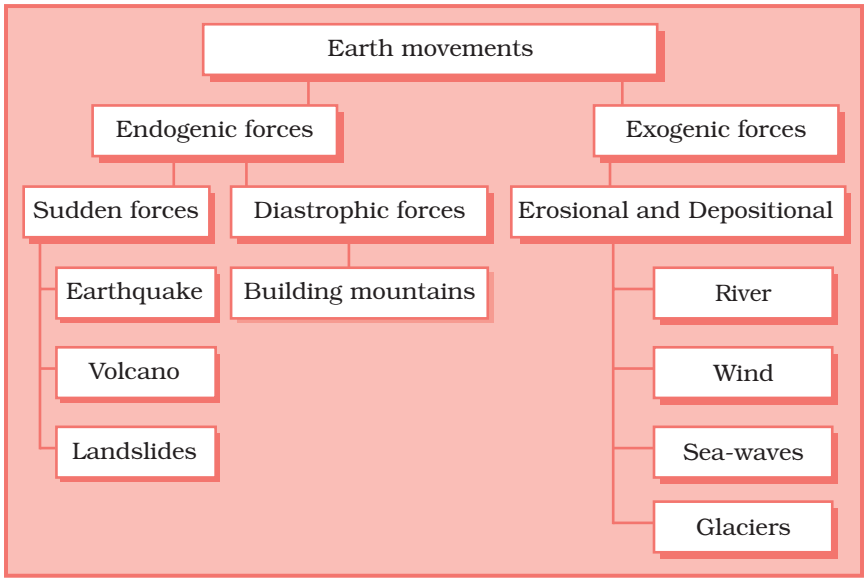


Fig. 3.1: Evolution of Landforms

Endogenic forces sometimes produce sudden movements and at the other times produce slow movements. Sudden movements like **earthquakes** and **volcanoes** cause mass destruction over the surface of the earth.

A **volcano** is a vent (opening) in the earth's crust through which molten material erupts suddenly (Fig. 3.2).

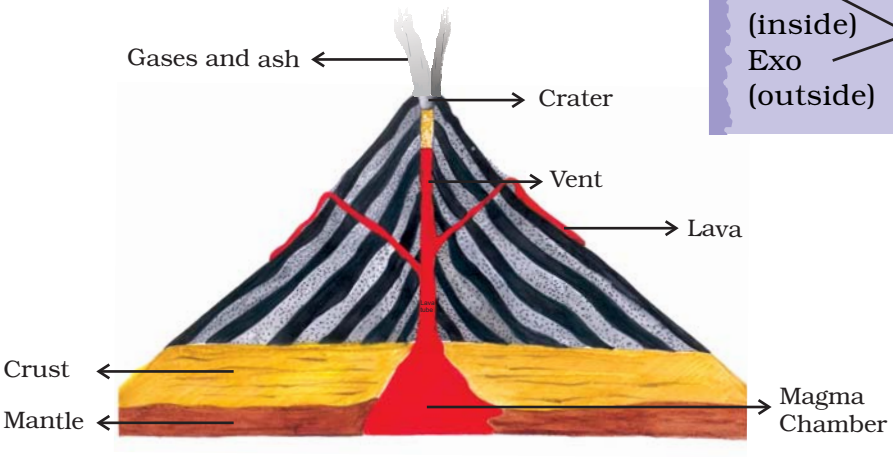


Fig. 3.2: A Volcano

Similarly, when the Lithospheric plates move, the surface of the earth vibrates. The vibrations can travel all round the earth. These vibrations are called **earthquakes** (Fig. 3.3). The place in the crust where the movement starts is called the **focus**. The place on the surface above the focus is called the **epicentre**. Vibrations travel outwards from the epicentre as waves. Greatest damage is usually closest to the epicentre and the strength of the earthquake decreases away from the centre.

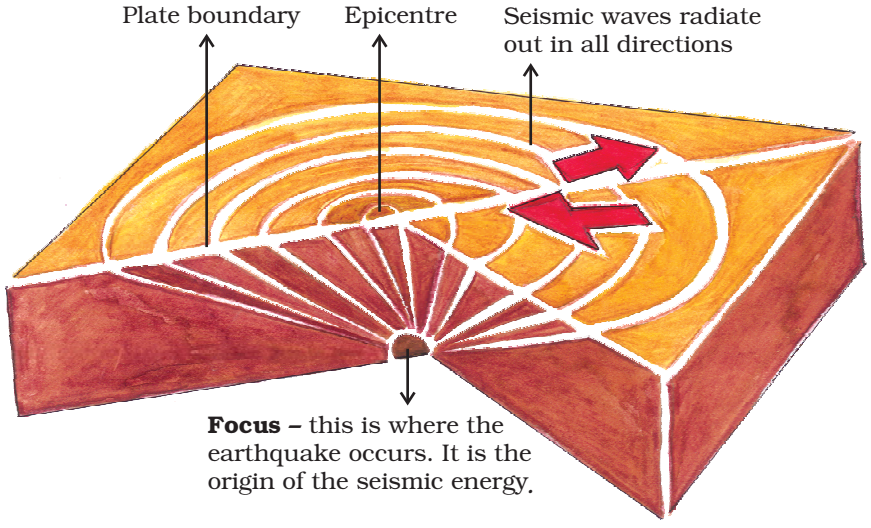


Fig. 3.3: Origin of an Earthquake

Word Origin

Endo (inside) + genic (origin) → Endogenic

Exo (outside) + genic (origin) → Exogenic

Activity

Take a container, fill it with water and close it with a lid. Put the water to boil. Now put some peas, spoon and beads on top on the lid. What do you notice? As the water boils the lid begins to shake. The things which you have put on the lid also vibrate. The beads roll down and the spoon vibrates to make a sound. In the same manner, the earth vibrates when an earthquake occurs.

Do you know?

There are three types of earthquake waves.

1. P waves or longitudinal waves
2. S waves or transverse waves
3. L waves or surface waves

Try to find out the properties of these waves from an encyclopedia.

Fig. 3.3a: Destruction caused by an Earthquake at Bhuj

Although earthquakes cannot be predicted, the impact can certainly be minimised if we are prepared before-hand.

Some common earthquake prediction methods adopted locally by people include studying animal behaviour; fish in the ponds get agitated, snakes come to the surface.

Earthquake – A Case Study

1 EARTHQUAKE HITS BHUJ

A massive earthquake measuring 6.9 on Richter scale hit Bhuj Town on 26th January 2001.

2 *School worst affected*

Atleast 971 students and 31 teachers are feared to have lost their lives following the collapse of school buildings.

3 BHUJ RELIEF EFFORT BLIGHTED..

Three days after the quake, concern rose about food, blankets and medical supplies not reaching everyone.

4 Destruction of Bhuj

Phone lines, water pipelines and power stations transmission lines were knocked out.

5 Fire in the city

Hundreds of fires started as charcoal, cookers overturned.

6 Emergency declared in quake zone

The President declares a state of emergency.

7 CM'S APPEAL TO THE CENTRE

Gujarat appeals for financial help. The Chief Minister of Gujarat has launched an appeal for the Centre to deal with the disaster.

Do you know?

An earthquake is measured with a machine called a seismograph. The magnitude of the earthquake is measured on the Richter scale. An earthquake of 2.0 or less can be felt only a little. An earthquake over 5.0 can cause damage from things falling. A 6.0 or higher magnitude is considered very strong and 7.0 is classified as a major earthquake.

A Seismograph

Activity

1. Read the 'Earthquake – A case study' given in the form of headlines that appeared in the newspapers after the quake. Arrange the events in the right sequence of their happening.
2. Imagine if a quake suddenly shook in the middle of the school day, where would you go for safety?

Earthquake Preparedness

Where to take shelter during an earthquake —

Safe Spot – Under a kitchen counter, table or desk, against an inside corner or wall.

Stay Away from – Fire places, areas around chimneys, windows that shatter including mirrors and picture frames.

Be Prepared – Spread awareness amongst your friends and family members and face any disaster confidently.

Major Land Forms

The landscape is being continuously worn away by two processes – weathering and erosion. **Weathering** is the breaking up of the rocks on the earth's surface. **Erosion** is the wearing away of the landscape by different agents like water, wind and ice. The eroded material is carried away or transported by water, wind, etc. and eventually deposited. This process of erosion and deposition create different landforms on the surface of the earth.

Work of a River

The running water in the river erodes the landscape. When the river tumbles at steep angle over very hard rocks or down a steep valley side it forms a **waterfall** (Fig. 3.4).

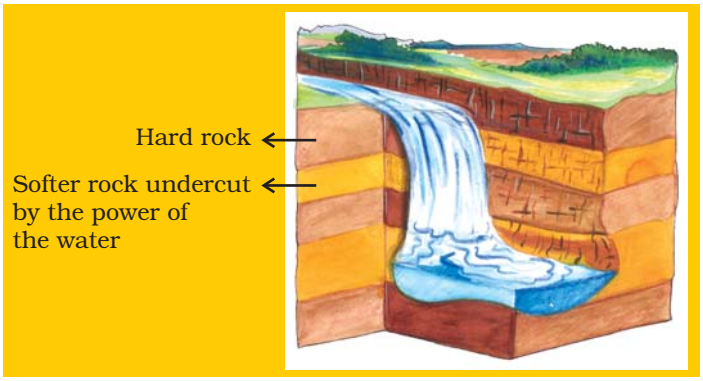


Fig. 3.4: Waterfall

Do you know?

- There are thousands of small waterfalls in the world. The highest waterfall is Angel Falls of Venezuela in South America. The other waterfalls are Niagara falls located on the border between Canada and USA in North America and Victoria Falls on the borders of Zambia and Zimbabwe in Africa.

The Niagra falls

As the river enters the plain it twists and turns forming large bends known as **meanders**. Due to continuous erosion and deposition along the sides of the meander, the ends of the meander loop come closer and closer. In due course of time the meander loop cuts off from the river and forms a cut-off lake, also called an **ox-bow lake**. At times the river overflows its banks. This leads to the flooding of the neighbouring areas. As it floods, it deposits layers of fine soil and other material called sediments along its banks. This leads to the formation of a flat fertile **floodplain**. The raised banks are called **levees**. As the river approaches the sea, the speed of the flowing water decreases and the

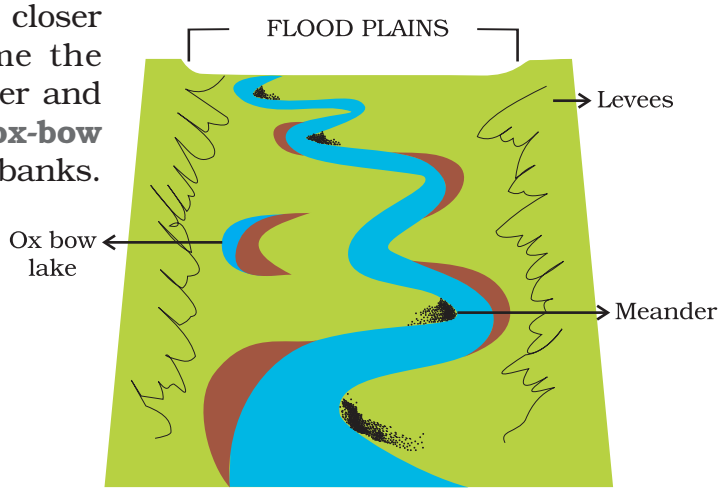


Fig. 3.5: Features made by a river in a flood plain

Let's do

Can you find out names of some rivers of the world that form a delta?

river begins to break up into a number of streams called distributaries. The river becomes so slow that it begins to deposit its load. Each distributary forms its own mouth. The collection of sediments from all the mouths forms a **delta**.

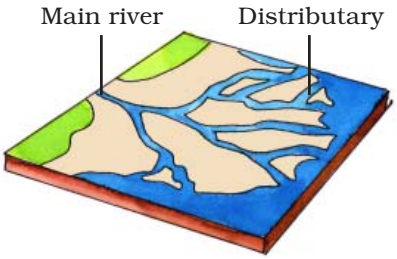


Fig. 3.6: Delta

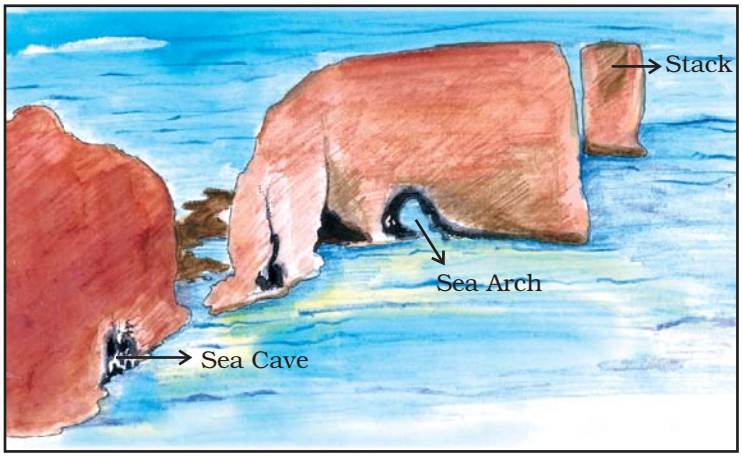


Fig. 3.7: Features made by sea waves

Work of Sea Waves

The erosion and deposition of the sea waves gives rise to coastal landforms. Seawaves continuously strike at the rocks. Cracks develop. Over time they become larger and wider. Thus, hollow like caves are formed on the rocks. They are called **sea caves**. As these cavities become bigger and bigger only the roof of the caves remain, thus forming **sea arches**. Further, erosion breaks the roof and only walls are left. These wall like features are called **stacks**. The steep rocky coast rising almost vertically above sea water is called **sea cliff**. The sea waves deposit sediments along the shores forming beaches.

Fig. 3.8: Glacier

Work of Ice

Glaciers are "rivers" of ice which too erode the landscape by bulldozing soil and stones to expose the solid rock below. Glaciers carve out deep hollows. As the ice melts they get filled up with water and become beautiful lakes in the mountains. The material carried by the glacier such as rocks big and small, sand and silt gets deposited. These deposits form **glacial moraines**.

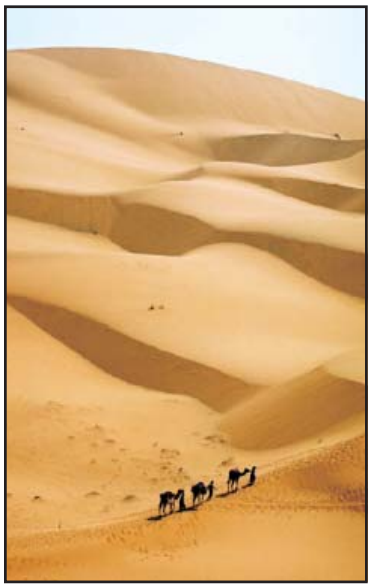


Fig. 3.9: Sand Dunes

Work of wind

Have you ever visited a desert? Try to collect some pictures of sand dunes.

An active agent of erosion and deposition in the deserts is wind. In deserts you can see rocks in the shape of a mushroom, commonly called **mushroom rocks**. Winds erode the lower section of the rock more than the upper part. Therefore, such rocks have narrower base and wider top. When the wind blows, it lifts and transports sand from one place to another. When it stops blowing the sand falls and gets deposited in low hill – like structures. These are called **sand dunes** (Fig. 3.9). When the grains of sand are very fine and light, the wind can carry it over very long distances. When such sand is deposited in large areas, it is called **loess**. Large deposits of loess is found in China.

1. Answer the following questions.

(i) Why do the plates move?

(ii) What are exogenic and endogenic forces?

(iii) What is erosion?

(iv) How are flood plains formed?

(v) What are sand dunes?

(vi) How are beaches formed?

(vii) What are ox bow lakes?

2. Tick the correct answer.

(i) Which is not an erosional feature of sea waves?
(a) Cliff (b) Beach (c) Sea cave

(ii) The depositional feature of a glacier is:
(a) Flood plain (b) Beach (c) Moraine

(iii) Which is caused by the sudden movements of the earth?
(a) Volcano (b) Folding (c) Flood plain

(iv) Mushroom rocks are found in:
(a) Deserts (b) River valleys (c) Glaciers

(v) Ox bow lakes are found in:
(a) Glaciers (b) River valleys (c) Deserts

3. Match the following.

(i) Glacier	(a) Sea shore
(ii) Meanders	(b) River of ice
(iii) Beach	(c) Rivers
(iv) Sand dunes	(d) Vibrations of earth
(v) Waterfall	(e) Hard bed rock
(vi) Earthquake	(f) Deserts

4. Give reasons.

(i) Some rocks have a shape of a mushroom.

(ii) Flood plains are very fertile.

(iii) Sea caves are turned into stacks.

(iv) Buildings collapse due to earthquakes.

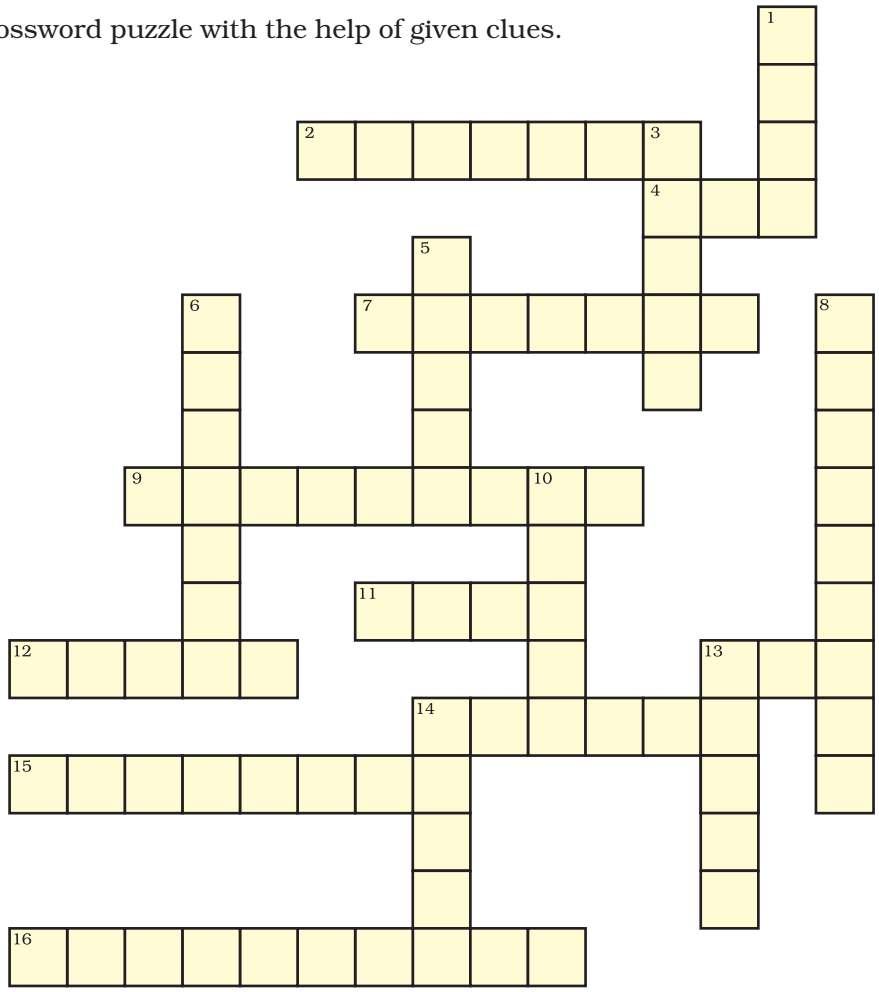
5. Activity.

Observe the photographs given below. These are various features made by a river. Identify them and also tell whether they are erosional or depositional or landforms formed by both.

Photograph	Name of the Feature	Type (Erosional or Depositional or Both)
		
		
		

6. For fun.

Solve the crossword puzzle with the help of given clues.



Across

2. Loop like bend of river
4. Solid form of water
7. Moving mass of ice
9. Sudden descent of water in bed of river
11. Natural cavity on weak rocks formed by action of waves
12. Embankment on river that keeps river in its channel
13. Large body of sea water
14. Dry area where sand dunes are found
15. Small hill of sand piled by action of wind
16. Flat plain formed by river deposits during time of flood

Down

1. Rise and fall of water caused by friction of wind on water surface
3. Flow of water in channel
5. Steep perpendicular face of rock along sea coast
6. Debris of boulder and coarse material carried by glacier
8. Crescent shaped lake formed by river meander
10. Fine sand deposited by action of wind
13. Isolated mass of rising steep rock near coastline
14. Alluvial tracts of land at mouth of river formed by river deposits

4 Air

Do you know?

Carbon dioxide released in the atmosphere creates a green house effect by trapping the heat radiated from the earth. It is therefore called a **greenhouse** gas and without it the earth would have been too cold to live in. However, when its level in the atmosphere increases due to factory smoke or car fumes, the heat retained increases the temperature of the earth. This is called **global warming**. This rise in temperature causes the snow in coldest parts of the world to melt. As a result the sea level rises, causing floods in the coastal areas. There may be drastic changes in the climate of a place leading to extinction of some plants and animals in the long run.

Our earth is surrounded by a huge blanket of air called atmosphere. All living beings on this earth depend on the atmosphere for their survival. It provides us the air we breathe and protects us from the harmful effects of the sun's rays. Without this blanket of protection, we would be baked alive by the heat of the sun during day and get frozen during night. So it is this mass of air that has made the temperature on the earth liveable.

Composition of the Atmosphere

Do you know that the air we take in while breathing is actually a mixture of many gases? Nitrogen and oxygen are two gases which make up the bulk of the atmosphere. Carbon dioxide, helium, ozone, argon and hydrogen are found in lesser quantities. Apart from these gases, tiny dust particles are also present in the air. The pie chart gives you the percentage of different constituents of air (Fig. 4.1).

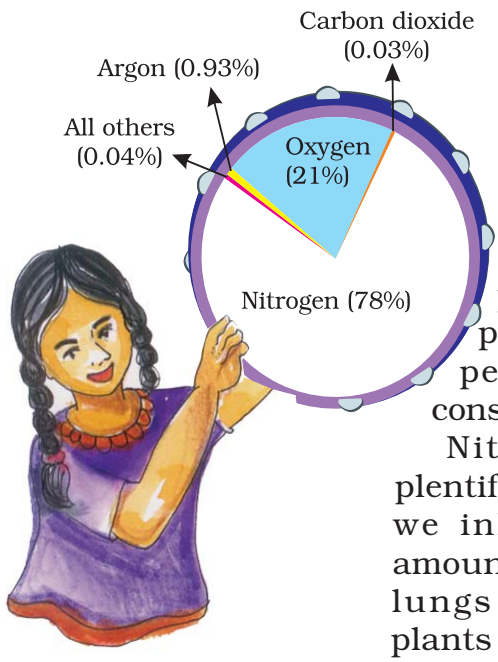


Fig. 4.1: Constituents of Air

Nitrogen is the most plentiful gas in the air. When we inhale, we take some amount of nitrogen into our lungs and exhale it. But plants need nitrogen for their survival. They can not take

nitrogen directly from the air. Bacteria, that live in the soil and roots of some plants, take nitrogen from the air and change its form so that plants can use it.

Oxygen is the second most plentiful gas in the air. Humans and animals take oxygen from the air as they breathe. Green plants produce oxygen during photosynthesis. In this way oxygen content in the air remains constant. If we cut trees then this balance gets disturbed.

Carbon dioxide is another important gas. Green plants use carbon dioxide to make their food and release oxygen. Humans or animals release carbon dioxide. The amount of carbon dioxide released by humans or animals seems to be equal to the amount used by the plants which make a perfect balance. However, the balance is upset by burning of fuels, such as coal and oil. They add billions of tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere each year. As a result, the increased volume of carbon dioxide is affecting the earth's weather and climate.

When air is heated, it expands, becomes lighter and goes up. Cold air is denser and heavy. That is why it tends to sink down. When hot air rises, cold air from surrounding area rushes there to fill in the gap. That is how air circulation takes place.

Read and Ponder: Is global warming a serious issue in today's world?

Structure of the Atmosphere

Our atmosphere is divided into five layers starting from the earth's surface. These are **Troposphere**, **Stratosphere**, **Mesosphere**, **Thermosphere and Exosphere** (Fig. 4.2).

Troposphere: This layer is the most important layer of the atmosphere. Its average height is 13 km. The air we breathe exists here. Almost all the weather phenomena like rainfall, fog and hailstorm occur in this layer.

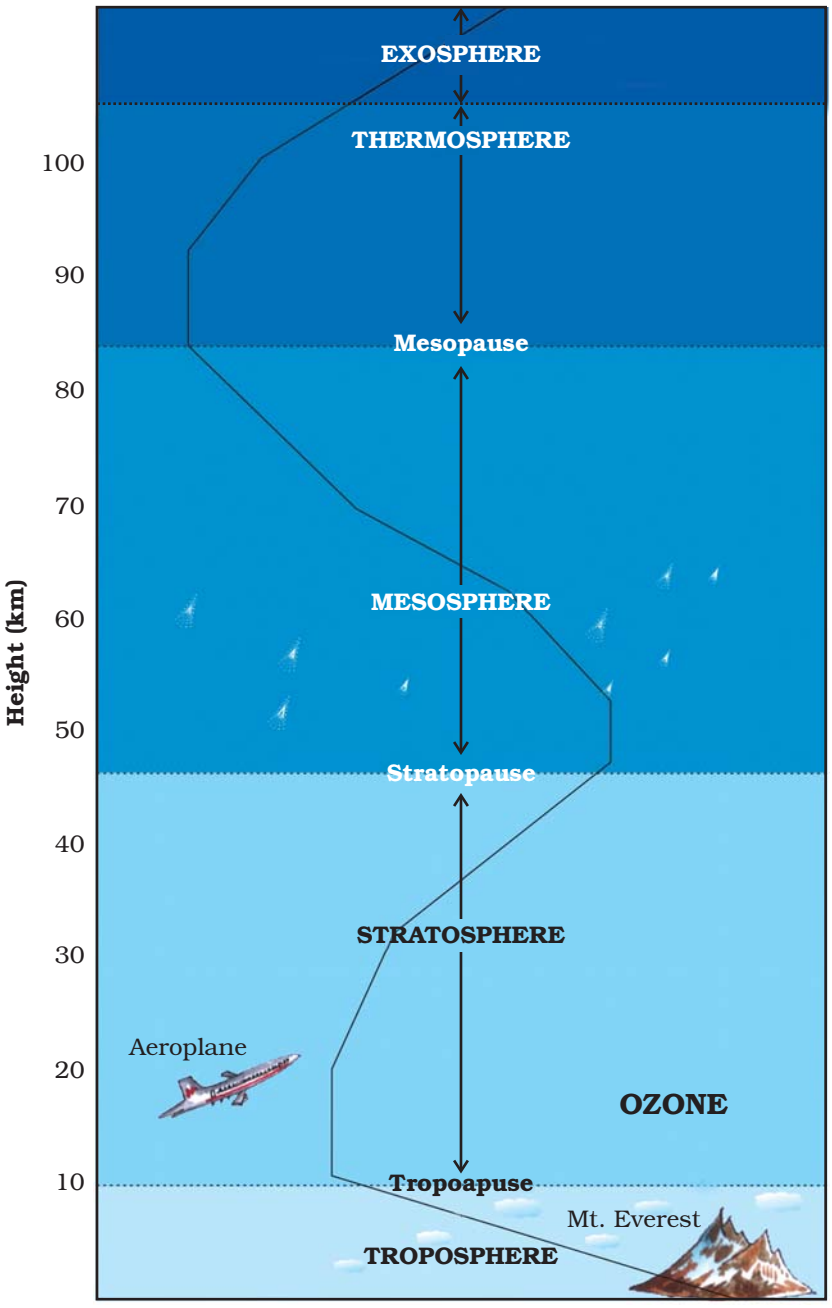


Fig. 4.2: Layers of Atmosphere

Stratosphere: Above the troposphere lies the stratosphere. It extends up to a height of 50 km. This layer is almost free from clouds and associated weather phenomenon, making conditions most ideal for flying aeroplanes. One important feature of stratosphere is that it contains a layer of ozone gas. We have just learnt how it protects us from the harmful effect of the sun rays.

Mesosphere: This is the third layer of the atmosphere. It lies above the stratosphere. It extends up to the height of 80 km. Meteorites burn up in this layer on entering from the space.

Thermosphere: In thermosphere temperature rises very rapidly with increasing height. Ionosphere is a part of this layer. It extends between

80-400 km. This layer helps in radio transmission. In fact, radio waves transmitted from the earth are reflected back to the earth by this layer.

Exosphere: The upper most layer of the atmosphere is known as exosphere. This layer has very thin air. Light gases like helium and hydrogen float into the space from here.

Let's do

For ten days note down weather report from a local newspaper and observe the changes occurring in the weather.

Weather and Climate

"Is it going to rain today?" "Will it be bright and sunny today?" How many times have we heard this from anxious cricket fans speculating the fate of a One Day match? If we imagine our body to be a radio and the mind its speaker, weather is something that fiddles with its control knobs. Weather is this hour-to-hour, day to day condition of the atmosphere. A hot or humid weather may make one irritable. A pleasant, breezy weather may make one cheerful and even plan for an outing. Weather can change dramatically from day to day. However, the average weather condition of a place for a longer period of time represents the **climate** of a place. Now do you understand why we have daily weather forecasts.

Do you know?

You will be surprised to know that the earth receives only 1 in 2,000,000,0000 parts of the sun's energy.

Temperature

The temperature you feel everyday is the temperataure of the atmosphere. The degree of hotness and coldness of the air is known as temperature.

The temperature of the atmosphere changes not only between day and night but also from season to season. Summers are hotter than winters.

An important factor that influences the distribution of temperature is ***insolation***. ***Insolation*** is the incoming solar energy intercepted by the earth.

The amount of insolation decreases from the equator towards the poles. Therefore, the

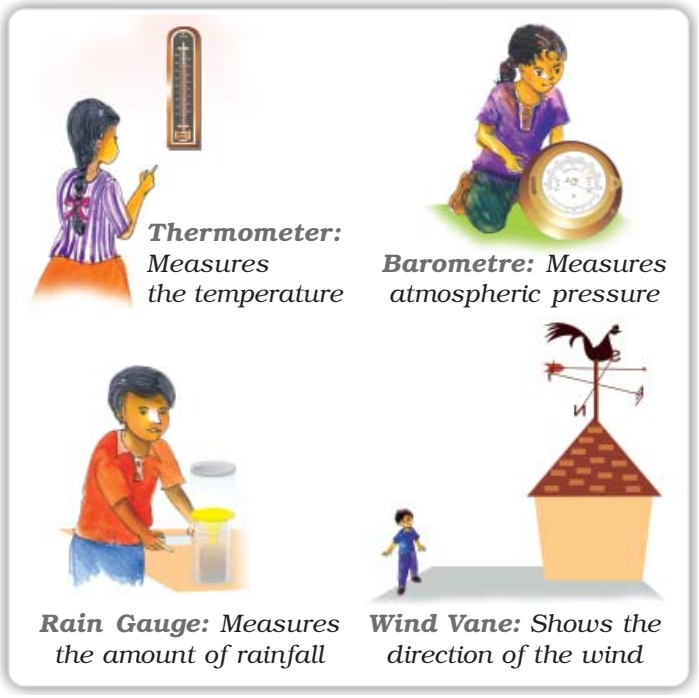


Fig. 4.3: Weather Instruments

The standard unit of measuring temperature is degree Celsius. It was invented by Anders Celsius. On the Celsius scale the water freezes at 0°C and boils at 100°C.

temperature decreases in the same manner. Now do you understand why poles are covered with snow? If the earth's temperature rises too high, it would become too warm for some crops to grow. Temperature in cities is much higher than that of villages. The concrete and metals in buildings and the asaphalt of roads get heated up during the day. This heat is released during the night.

Also, the crowded high rise buildings of the cities trap the warm air and thus raise the temperature of the cities.

Air Pressure

On the moon there is no air and hence no air pressure.

Astronauts have to wear special protective space suits filled with air when they go to the moon. If they did not wear these space suits, the counter pressure exerted by the body of the astronauts would make the blood vessels burst. The astronauts would bleed.

You will be surprised to know that air above us presses us with a great force on our bodies. However, we don't even feel it. This is because the air presses us from all directions and our body exerts a counter pressure.

Air pressure is defined as the pressure exerted by the weight of air on the earth's surface. As we go up the layers of atmosphere, the pressure falls rapidly. The air pressure is highest at sea level and decreases with height. Horizontally the distribution of air pressure is influenced by temperature of air at a given place. In areas where temperature is high the air gets heated and rises. This creates a low-pressure area. Low pressure is associated with cloudy skies and wet weather.

In areas having lower temperature, the air is cold. It is therefore heavy. Heavy air sinks and creates a high pressure area. High pressure is associated with clear and sunny skies.

The air always moves from high pressure areas to low pressure areas.

Wind

A wind is named after the direction from which it blows, e.g. the wind blowing from the west is called westerly.

The movement of air from high pressure area to low pressure areas is called wind. You can see wind at work as it blows dry leaves down the pavement or uproots trees during a storm. Sometimes when the wind blows gently you can even see it blowing away smoke or fine dust. At times wind can be so strong that it is difficult to walk against it. You must have experienced it is not easy to hold an umbrella on a windy day. Think of some other examples when strong winds have created

problems for you. Winds can be broadly divided into three types.

1. *Permanent winds* – The trade winds, westerlies and easterlies are the permanent winds. These blow constantly throughout the year in a particular direction.
2. *Seasonal winds* – These winds change their direction in different seasons. For example monsoons in India.
3. *Local winds* – These blow only during a particular period of the day or year in a small area. For example, land and sea breeze. Do you recall the hot and dry local wind of northern planes of India? It is called *loo*.

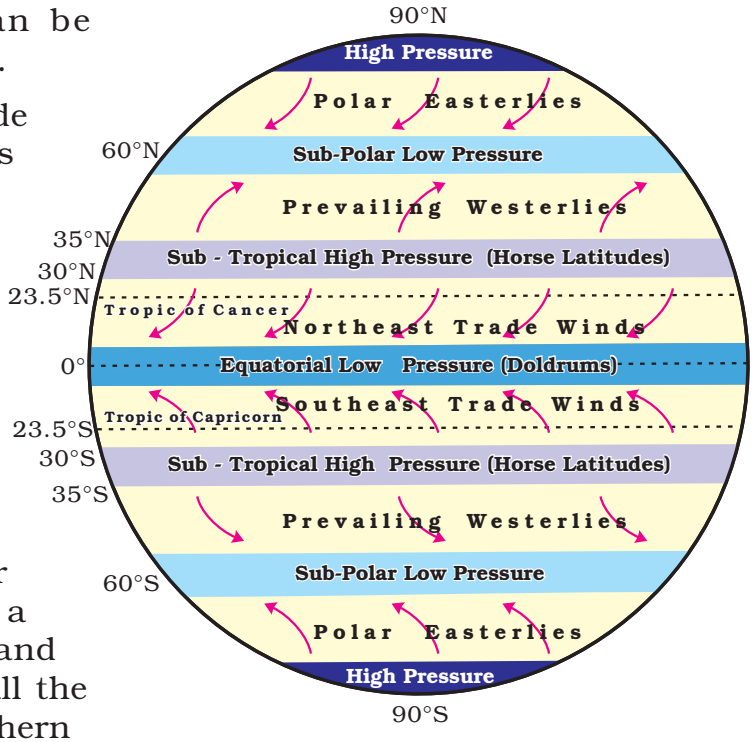


Fig. 4.4: *Major Pressure Belts and Wind System*

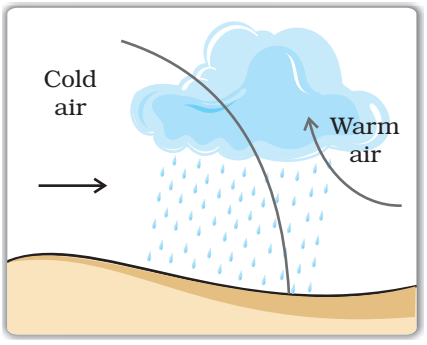
CYCLONE – NATURE'S FURY

Destruction caused by cyclone

Orissa, located on the eastern seacoast of India is prone to cyclones that originate in the Bay of Bengal. On 17-18 October 1999, cyclone hit five districts of the state. Another supercyclone occurred on the 29 October 1999, that devastated large portions of the state. The damages caused were mainly due to three factors: wind velocity, rain and tidal surge. The winds of upto 260 km. per hour lasted for over 36 hours. These high velocity winds uprooted trees and damaged the *kutcha* houses. Roof tops of several industrial sheds and other houses were also blown away. Power supply and telecom lines snapped completely. Heavy rain occurred under the influence of the cyclone for three days continuously. These rains led to flooding in the major rivers of Orissa. The cyclonic winds caused tidal waves that swept 20 km. inland and brought massive destruction to the coastal areas. The 7 to 10 m high tidal wave intruded suddenly and caused massive damage to the standing paddy crops.

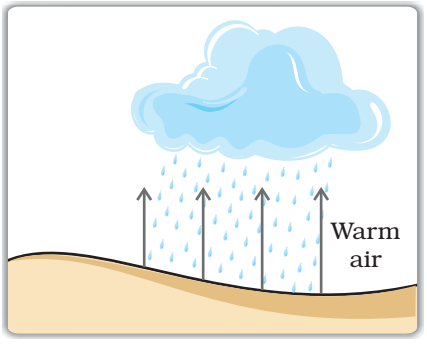
The cyclone originated as a "depression" in the Gulf of Thailand, near east of Port Blair, on 25 October 1999 and gradually moved in a northwestward direction. It intensified into a supercyclone and hit the area between Erasama and Balikuda in Orissa on 29 October at 10.30 a.m.

The supercyclone swept entire the coast of Orissa including the cities of Bhubaneshwar and Cuttack and 28 coastal towns. About 13 million people were affected. A large number of livestock were killed. Standing crops of paddy, vegetables and fruits were heavily damaged. Due to salinisation caused by tidal surge, large tracts of agricultural land have turned infertile. Large tracts of sal, teak and bamboo plantations have disappeared. The mangrove forests between Paradeep and Konark vanished.



Cyclonic Rainfall

Relief (Orographic) Rainfall



Convectional Rainfall

Fig. 4.5: *Types of Rainfall*

Moisture

When water evaporates from land and different water bodies, it becomes water vapour. Moisture in the air at any time, is known as humidity. When the air is full of water vapour we call it a humid day. As the air gets warmer, its capacity to hold the water vapour increases and so it becomes more and more humid. On a humid day, clothes take longer to dry and sweat from our body does not evaporate easily, making us feel very uncomfortable.

When the water vapour rises, it starts cooling. The water vapour condenses causing formation of droplets of water. Clouds are just masses of such water droplets. When these droplets of water become too heavy to float in air, then they come down as precipitation.

Jet planes flying in the sky leave a white trail behind them. The moisture from their engines condenses. We see trails of this condensed moisture for some time when there is no air movement to disturb it.

Precipitation that comes down to the earth in liquid form is called rain. Most of the ground water comes from rainwater. Plants help preserve water. When trees on hill sides are cut, rainwater flows down the bare mountains and can cause flooding of low lying areas. On the basis of mechanism, there are three types of rainfall: the convectional rainfall, the orographic rainfall and the cyclonic rainfall (Fig. 4.5).

Rainfall is very important for the survival of plants and animals. It brings fresh water to the earth's surface. If rainfall is less – water scacity and drought occur. On the other hand if it is more, floods take place.

Other forms of precipitation are snow, sleet, hail.

1. Answer the following questions.

(i) What is atmosphere?

(ii) Which two gases make the bulk of the atmosphere?

(iii) Which gas creates green house effect in the atmosphere?

(iv) What is weather?

(v) Name three types of rainfall?

(vi) What is air pressure?

2. Tick the correct answer.

(i) Which of the following gases protects us from harmful sun vays?
(a) Carbon dioxide (b) Nitrogen (c) Ozone

(ii) The most important layer of the atmosphere is
(a) Troposphere (b) Thermosphere (c) Mesosphere

(iii) Which of the following layers of the atmosphere is free from clouds?
(a) Temperature (b) Air pressure (c) Wind direction

(iv) As we go up the layers of the atmosphere, the pressure
(a) Increases (b) Decreases (c) Remains the same

(v) When precipitation comes down to the earth in the liquid form, it is called
(a) Cloud (b) Rain (c) Snow

3. Match the following.

(i) Trade Winds	(a) Seasonal wind
(ii) Loo	(b) Horizontal movement of Air
(iii) Monsoon	(c) Permanent wind
(iv) Wind	(d) Local wind

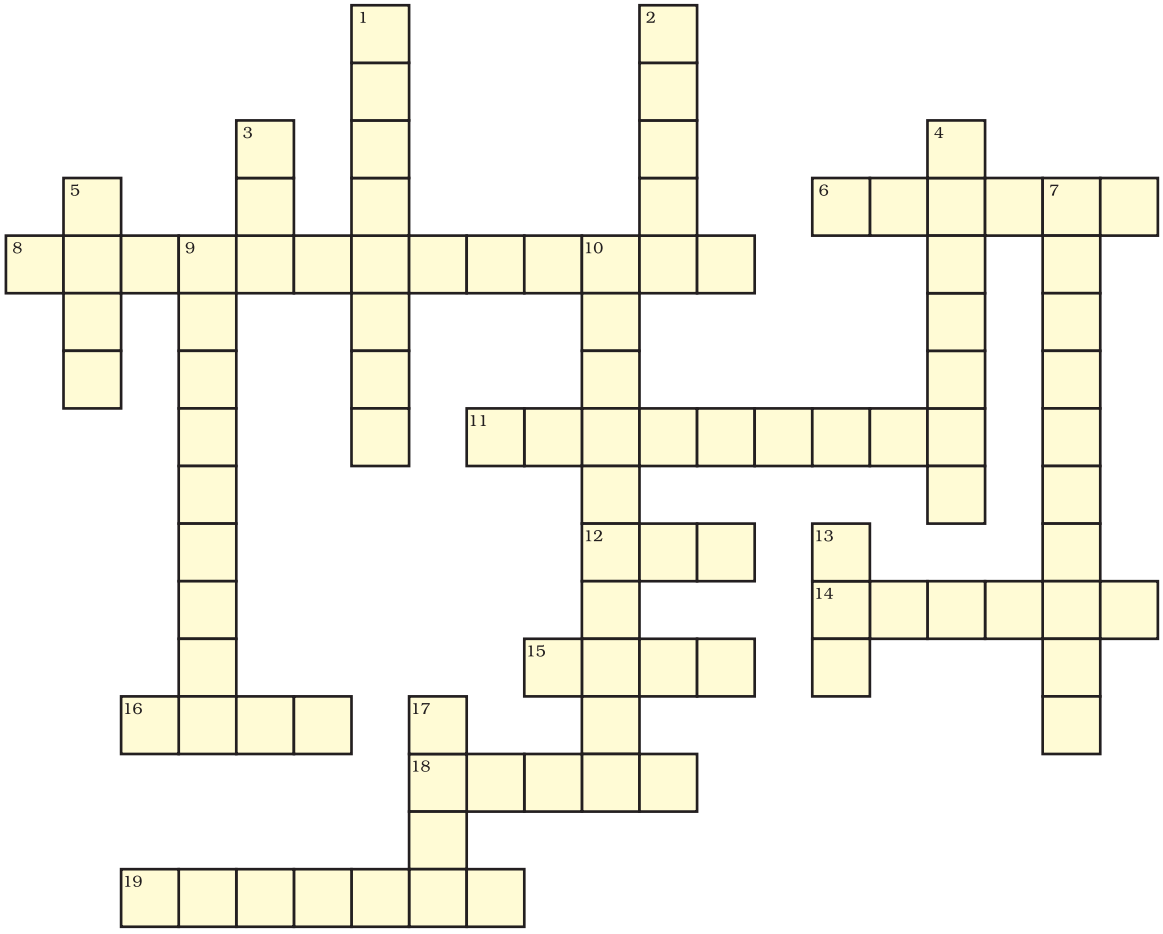
4. Give reasons.

(i) Wet clothes take longer time to dry on a humid day?

(ii) Amount of insolation decreases from equator towards poles?

5. For fun.

(i) Solve this Crossword puzzle with the help of given clues:



Across

6. An Indian tree having extraordinary quality of providing oxygen round the clock
8. Gas present in atmosphere occupying only 0.03% by volume
11. Outermost layer of atmosphere
12. Mixture of many gases
14. Life giving gas
15. Air in motion
16. An indian tree valued highly for medicinal properties
18. Gas protecting us from harmful sunrays
19. Low pressure area

Down

1. Amount of water vapour in air
2. Condensation of water vapours around dust particles in atmosphere
3. Example of local wind blowing in summer in northern india
4. Short term changes in atmosphere
5. Precipitation in liquid form
7. Blanket of air around the earth
9. Instrument to measure pressure
10. Incoming solar radiation
13. Reduces visibility in winters
17. It is ..... time when sun is overhead

(ii) Make a weather calendar for one week. Use pictures or symbols to show different types of weather. You can use more than one symbol in a day, if the weather changes. For example, the sun comes out when rain stops. An example is given below:

Day	Weather
1. 	Sunny day
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	

5 Water

Glossary

Terrarium: It is an artificial enclosure for keeping small house plants.

Activity

Make your own Terrarium

A Terrarium

Fill one-fourth of a big jar with soil and press it well. Put a thin layer of humus on top of it. Plant the largest plants first and then arrange the smaller area around them. Spray the arrangement with water and close the jar. The water that evaporates from the leaves and soil condenses and falls back as forms of water drops.

When you think of water, what images come to your mind? You think of rivers, the waterfalls, the pitter patter of raindrops, water in your taps... Children love to float paper boats in rain puddles. By noon the puddles vanish. Where does the water go?

The sun's heat causes evaporation of water vapour. When the water vapour cools down, it condenses and forms clouds. From there it may fall on the land or sea in the form of rain, snow or sleet.

The process by which water continually changes its form and circulates between oceans, atmosphere and land is known as the water cycle (Fig 5.1).

Our earth is like a terrarium. The same water that existed centuries ago still exists today. The water used to irrigate a field in Haryana may have flowed down the Amazon River a hundred years ago.

The major sources of fresh water are the rivers, ponds, springs and glaciers. The ocean bodies and the seas contain salty water. The water of the oceans is salty or saline as it contains large

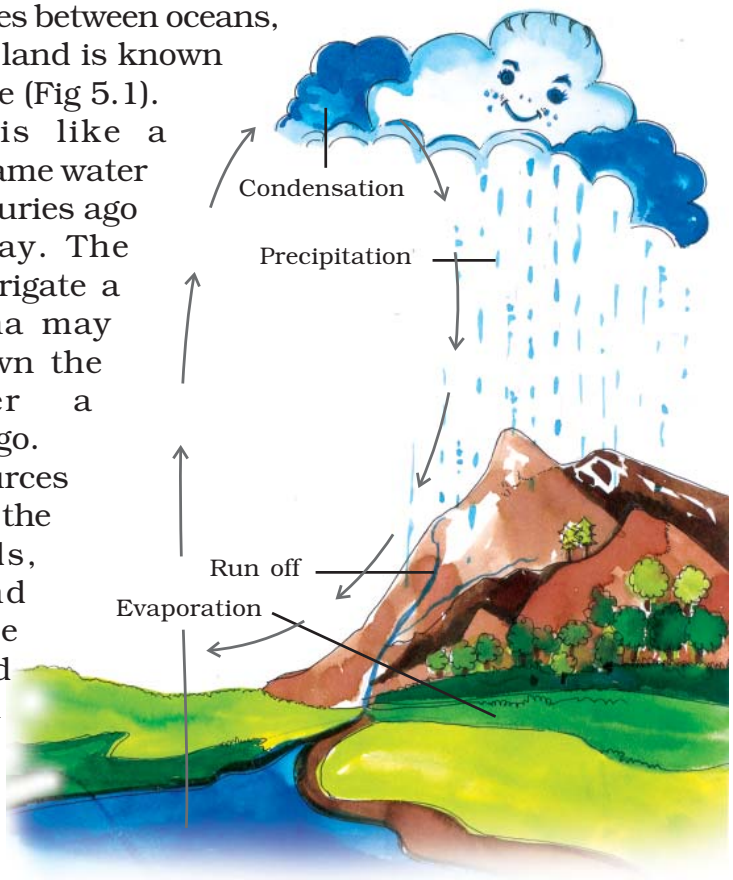


Fig. 5.1: Water Cycle

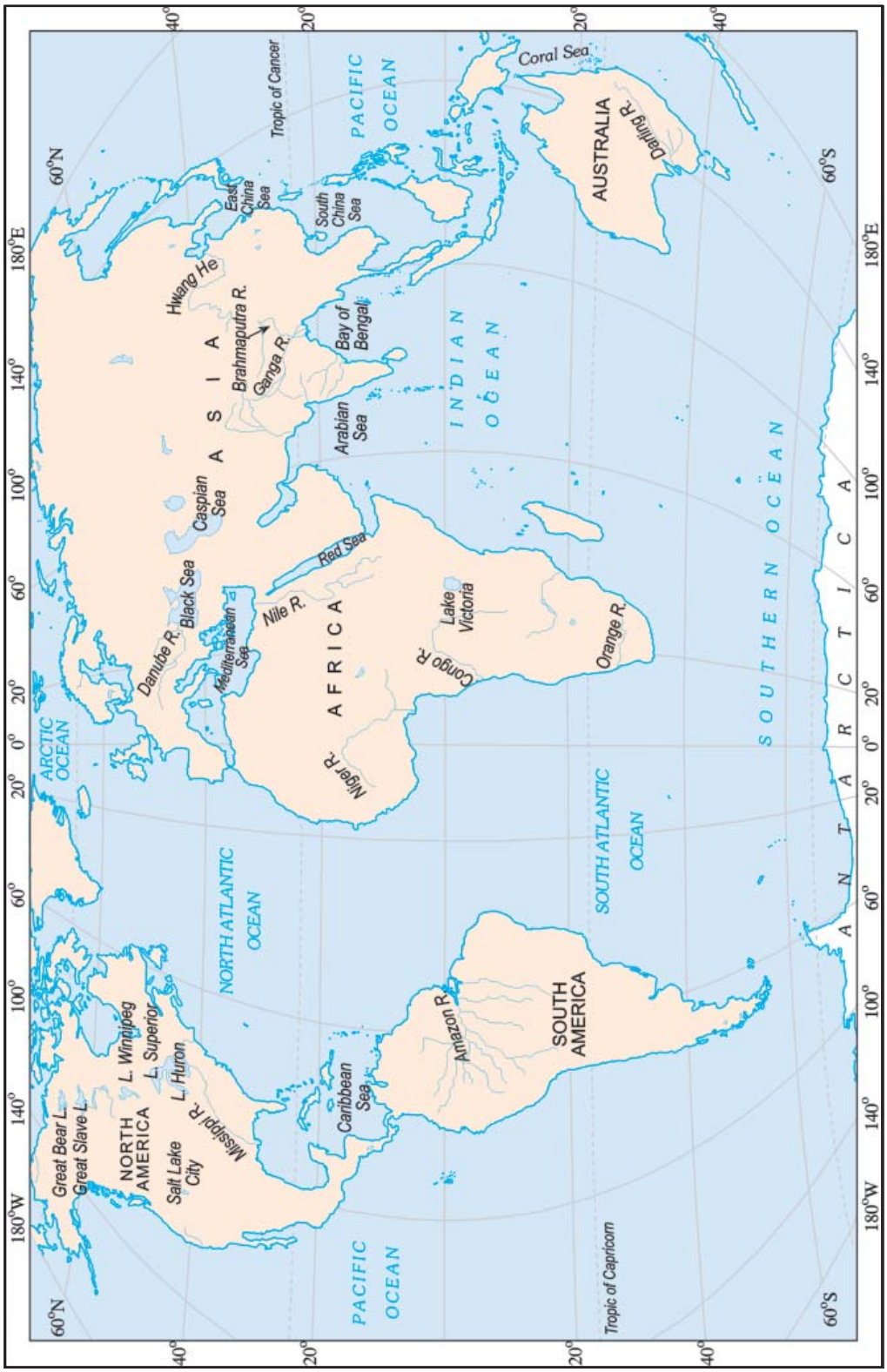


Fig. 5.2: World – Major Seas, Lakes and Rivers

amount of dissolved salts. Most of the salt is sodium chloride or the common table salt that you eat.

Salinity is the amount of salt in grams present in 1000 grams of water. The average salinity of the oceans is 35 parts per thousand.

Dead sea in Israel has salinity of 45 parts per thousand. Swimmers can float in it because the increased salt content make it dense.

Distribution of Water Bodies

We all know that three-fourth of the earth surface is covered by water. If there is more water than land on this earth, why do so many countries face water scarcity?

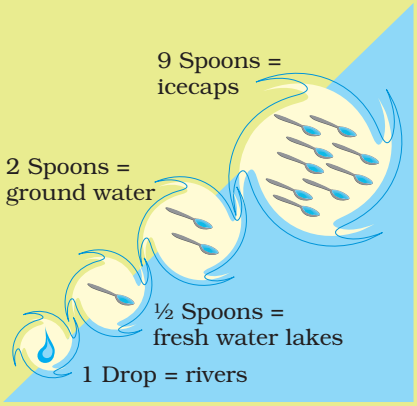
Is all the water on earth available to us? The following table gives the distribution of water in percentage.

Oceans	:	97.3	Saline Water
Ice-caps	:	02.0	Fresh Water
Ground water Fresh Water	:	0.68	
Fresh water lakes Inland seas &	:	0.009	
Salt lakes	:	0.009	
Atmosphere	:	0.0019	
Rivers	:	0.0001	
		100.00	

Water distribution can be demonstrated by a simple activity (see activity box).

Take 2 litres of water. Let it represent the total water on the surface of the earth. Measure out 12 spoons of water from this vessel into another bowl. The water that is left behind in the vessel represents the salty water found in oceans and seas. This water is obviously not fit for consuming. It is saline (contains salts).

The 12 spoons of water that was taken in a bowl is the total amount of fresh water on earth. The figure shows us the distribution of this fresh water. See for yourself how much water can actually be used by you.



Distribution of fresh water

Water is absolutely essential for survival. Water alone can quench our thirst when we are thirsty. Now don't you think we are wasting a precious resource when we use water carelessly?

- Why water is important for us?
- Suggest some ways in which water can be conserved in your home and in your school

Ocean Circulation

There is something magical about walking bare feet on the seashore. The wet sand on the beach, the cool breeze, the seabirds, the smell of the salt in the air and music of the waves; everything is so fascinating. Unlike the calm waters of ponds and lakes, ocean water keeps moving continuously. It is never still. The movements that occur in oceans can be broadly categorised as: waves, tides and currents.

Do you know?

March 22 is celebrated as World Water Day when the need to conserve water is reinforced in different ways.

Fig. 5.3: Pacific Ocean

Do you know?

Waves are formed when gentle winds scrape across the ocean surface. The stronger the wind blows, the bigger the wave becomes.

Waves

When you are playing throw ball on the beach and the ball falls into the water, what happens? It is fun to watch how the ball gets washed back to the shore by the waves. When the water on the surface of the ocean rises and falls alternately, they are called waves.

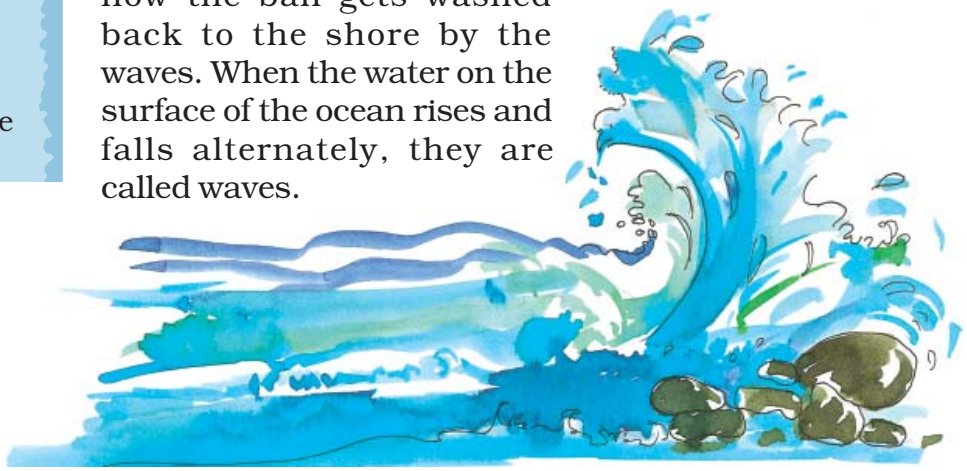


Fig. 5.4: Waves

Do you know?

Tsunami is a Japanese word that means "Harbour waves" as the harbours get destroyed whenever there is tsunami.

During a storm, the winds blowing at very high speed form huge waves. These may cause tremendous destruction. An earthquake, a volcanic eruption or underwater landslides can shift large amounts of ocean water. As a result a huge tidal wave called **tsunami**, that may be as high as 15m., is formed. The largest tsunami ever measured was 150m. high. These waves travel at a speed of more than 700 km. per hour. The tsunami of 2004 caused wide spread damage in the coastal areas of India. The Indira point in the Andaman and Nicobar islands got submerged after the tsunami.

TSUNAMI – THE EARTH'S PANDEMONIUM

Tsunami or the harbour wave struck havoc in the Indian Ocean on the 26 December 2004. The wave was the result of the earthquake that had its epicenter close to the western boundary of Sumatra. The magnitude of the earthquake was 9.0 on the Richter scale. As the Indian plate went under the Burma plate, there was a sudden movement of the sea floor, causing the earthquake. The ocean floor was displaced by about 10 – 20m and tilted in a downwardly direction. A huge mass of ocean water flowed to fill in the gap that was being created by the displacement. This marked the withdrawal of the water mass from the coastlines of the landmasses in the south and southeast Asia. After thrusting of the Indian plate below the Burma plate, the water mass rushed back towards the coastline. Tsunami travelled at a speed of about 800km. per hour, comparable to speed of commercial aircraft and completely washed away

some of the islands in the Indian ocean. The Indira point in the Andaman and Nicobar islands that marked the southernmost point of India got completely submerged. As the wave moved from earthquake epicenter from Sumatra towards the Andaman islands and Sri Lanka the wave length decreased with decreasing depth of water. The travel speed also declined from 700-900km. per hour to less than 70km. per hour. Tsunami waves travelled upto a depth of 3 km. from the coast killing more than 10,000 people and affected more than lakh of houses. In India, the worst affected were the coastal areas of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Pondicherry and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

While the earthquake cannot be predicted in advance, it is possible to give a three-hour notice of a potential tsunami. Such early warning systems are in place across the Pacific ocean, but not in the Indian Ocean. Tsunamis are rare in the Indian Ocean as the seismic activity is less as compared to the Pacific.

Destruction caused by tsunami on Tamil Nadu Coast

The tsunami that ravaged the South and South east Asian coasts in December 2004, is the most devastating tsunami in the last several hundred years. The large damage caused to life and property was primarily a result of lack of monitoring, the early warning systems and knowledge among the coast dwellers of Indian ocean.

The first indication that tsunami is approaching is the rapid withdrawal of water from the coastal region, followed by destructive wave. When this happened on the coast, instead of people going to high ground, they started assembling at the coast to view the miracle. As a consequence there was a large casualty of curious onlookers when the gigantic wave (tsunami) struck.

Tides

The rhythmic rise and fall of ocean water twice in a day is called a tide. It is high tide when water covers much of the shore by rising to its highest level. It is low tide when water falls to its lowest level and recedes from the shore.

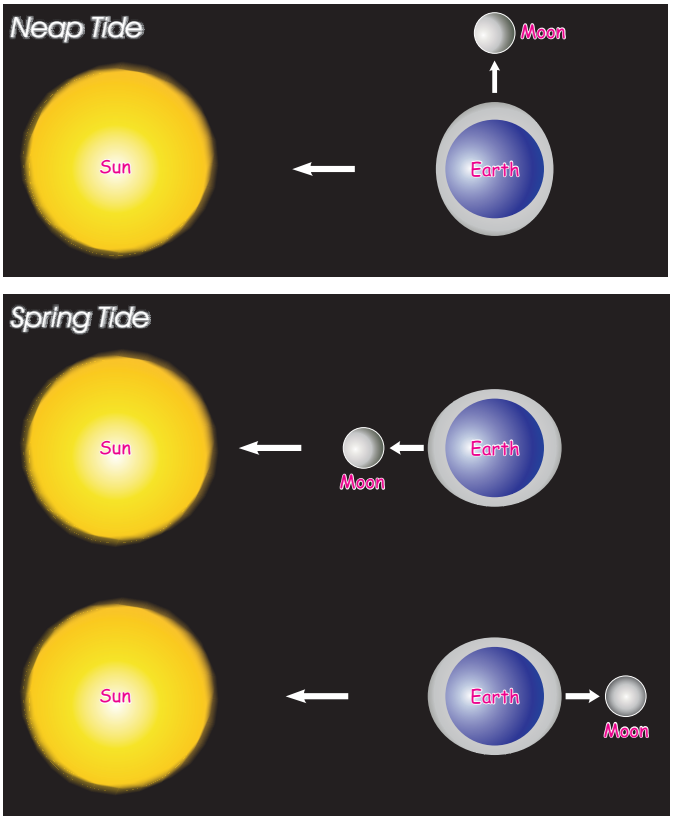


Fig. 5.5: Spring Tides and Neap Tide

The strong gravitational pull exerted by the sun and the moon on the earth's surface causes the tides. The water of the earth closer to the moon gets pulled under the influence of the moon's gravitational force and causes high tide. During the full moon and new moon days, the sun, the moon and the earth are in the same line and the tides are highest. These tides are called spring tides. But when the moon is in its first and last quarter, the ocean waters get drawn in diagonally opposite directions by the gravitational pull of sun and earth resulting in low tides. These tides are called neap tides (Fig. 5.5).

High tides help in navigation. They raise the water level close to the shores. This helps the ships to arrive at the harbour more easily. The high tides also help in fishing. Many more fish come closer to the shore during the high tide. This enables fishermen to get a plentiful catch. The rise and fall of water due to tides is being used to generate electricity in some places.

Fill three-fourths of a bucket with tap water. Heat the water by putting an immersion road on one side of the bucket. On the other side introduce an ice tray just removed from the freezer. Add a drop of red ink to observe the path of current by the process of convection.

Ocean Currents

Ocean currents are streams of water flowing constantly on the ocean surface in definite directions. The ocean currents may be warm or cold (Fig. 5.6). Generally, the warm ocean currents originate near the equator and move towards the poles. The cold currents carry water from polar or higher latitudes to tropical or lower latitudes. The Labrador Ocean current is cold current while the Gulf Stream is a warm current. The ocean current influence the temperature conditions of the area. Warm currents bring about warm temperature over land surface. The areas where the warm and cold currents meet provide the best fishing grounds of the

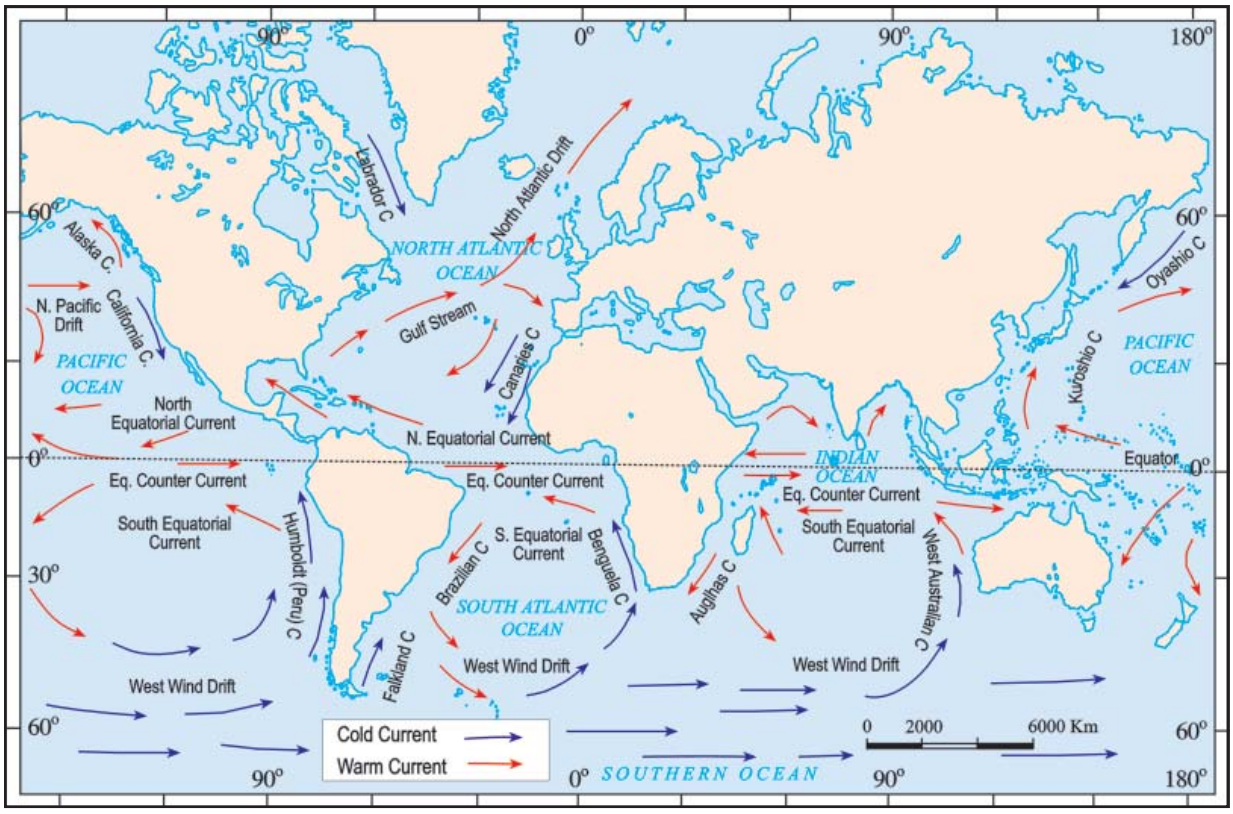


Fig. 5.6: Ocean Currents

world. Seas around Japan and the eastern coast of North America are such examples. The areas where a warm and cold current meet also experience foggy weather making it difficult for navigation.

1. Answer the following questions.

(i) What is precipitation?
(ii) What is water cycle?
(iii) What are the factors affecting the height of the waves?
(iv) Which factors affect the movement of ocean water?
(v) What are tides and how are they caused?
(vi) What are ocean currents?

2. Give reasons.

(i) Ocean water is salty.
(ii) The quality of water is deterioting.

3. Tick the correct answer.

(i) The process by which water continually changes its form and circulates between oceans, atmosphere and land

(a) Water cycle (b) Tides (c) Ocean currents

(ii) Generally the warm ocean currents originate near

(a) Poles (b) Equator (c) None of these

(iii) The rythmic rise and fall of ocean water twice in a day is called

(a) Tide (b) Ocean current (c) Wave

4. Match the following.

(i) Caspian Sea	Largest lake
(ii) Tide	Periodic rise and fall of water
(iii) Tsunami	Strong seismic waves.
(iv) Ocean currents	Streams of water moving in definite paths.

5. For fun.

Be a Detective

(i) The name of one river is hidden in each of the sentences below. Spot it.

Example: Mand**ra**, **Vi**jayalakshmi and Surinder are my best friends

Answer: Ravi

(a) The snake charmer's bustee, stables where horses are housed, and the piles of wood, all caught fire accidentally. (Hint: Another name for River Brahmputra)

(b) The conference manager put pad, material for reading and a pencil for each participant. (Hint: A distributary on the Ganga-Brahmputra delta)

(c) Either jealousy or anger cause a person's fall (Hint: Name of a juicy fruit!)

(d) Bhavani germinated the seeds in a pot (Hint: Look for her in West Africa)

(e) "I am a zonal champion now" declared the excited atheletic. (Hint: The river that has he biggest basin in the world)

(f) The tiffin box rolled down and all the food fell in dusty potholes. (Hint: Rises in India and journeys through Pakistan)

(g) Malini leaned against the pole when she felt that she was going to faint. (Hint: Her delta in Egypt is famous)

(h) Samantha mesmerised everybody with her magic tricks. (Hint: London is situated on her estuary)

(i) "In this neighbourhood, please don't yell! Owners of these houses like to have peace". Warned my father when we moved into our new flat". (Hint: colour!)

(j) 'Write the following words, Marc!' "On", "go", "in"…… said the teacher to the little boy in KG Class. (Hint: Rhymes with 'bongo')

Now make some more on your own and ask your classmates to spot the hidden name. You can do this with any name: that of a lake, mountains, trees, fruits, school items etc.

Carry on Detective

(ii) With the help of an atlas, draw each river which you discoverd in For fun (i), on an outline map of the world.

6 Natural Vegetation and Wild Life

Salima was excited about the summer camp she was attending. She had gone to visit Manali in Himachal Pradesh along with her class mates. She recalled how surprised she was to see the changes in the landform and natural vegetation as the bus climbed higher and higher. The deep jungles of the foothills comprising sal and teak slowly disappeared. She could see tall trees with thin pointed leaves and cone shaped canopies on the mountain slopes. She learnt that those were coniferous trees. She noticed blooms of bright flowers on tall trees. These were the rhododendrons. From Manali as she was travelling up to Rohtang pass she saw that the land was covered with short grass and snow in some places.

Fig. 6.1: *Rhododendron*

From Salima's observations, we surmise that there is a close relationship between height of land and the character of vegetations. With the change in height, the climate changes and that changes natural vegetation. The growth of vegetation depends on temperature and moisture. It also depends on factors like slope and thickness of soil.

The type and thickness of natural vegetation varies from place to place because of the variation in these factors.

Natural vegetation is generally classified in to three broad categories as follows:

(a) *Forests*: Which grow where temperature and rainfall are plentiful to support a tree cover. Depending upon these factors, dense and open forests grown.

Let's do

Now can you tell why Salima saw changes in the natural vegetation as she climbed higher and higher? What type of vegetations did she see in the Himalayas starting with the foothills and going to the higher altitudes?

Let's do

- Like Salima, when you go to visit any new place, notice the type of natural vegetation occurring there and try to think of factors responsible for the growth of such vegetation in that habitat.
- Note down if any human interference has taken place in that area in terms of deforestation, grazing, cultivation of cash crops, constructional activities etc.

Fig. 6.2: Thorny shrubs

(b) *Grasslands*: Which grow in the region of moderate rain.

(c) *Shrubs*: Thorny shrubs and scrubs grow in the dry region (Fig. 6.2).

Salima was sharing her experience of Himalayan trip with her father. Her father visited various places in the world. He told Salima about his observations of the variety of vegetation in different parts of different continents.He mentioned about coniferous forests in the sub polar regions, thorny bushes in the deserts, thick tropical hardwood forest in the humid regions and many more. Salima realised the Himalayas have almost all variety of vegetation which one can see while moving from the equator to the polar region.

The changes in the type of natural vegetation occur mainly because of the changes of climatic condition. Let us get to know the different types of natural vegetation of the world with their characteristic features and wildlife inhabiting there.

Do you know?

The tropical evergreen forest in Brazil is so enormous that it is like the lungs of the earth: Can you tell why?

Forests

Tropical Evergreen Forests

These forests are also called tropical rainforests (Fig. 6.3). These thick forests occur in the regions near the equator and close to the tropics. These regions are hot and receive heavy rainfall throughout the year. As there is no particular dry season, the trees do not shed their leaves altogether. This is the reason they are called evergreen. The thick canopies of the closely spaced trees do not allow the sunlight to penetrate inside the forest even in the day time. Hardwood trees like rosewood, ebony, mahogany are common here.

Fig. 6.3: Tropical Evergreen Forests

Do you know?

Anaconda, one of the world's largest snakes is found in the tropical rainforest. It can kill and eat a large animal such as a crocodile.

Tropical Deciduous Forests

Tropical deciduous are the monsoon forests found in the large part of India,northern Australia and in central America (Fig. 6.4).These regions experience seasonal changes. Trees shed their leaves in the dry season to conserve water. The hardwood trees found in these forests are sal, teak, neem and shisham. Hardwood trees are extremely useful for making furniture, transport and constructional materials. Tigers, lions, elephants, langoors and monkeys are the common animals of these regions (Fig. 6.5, 6.6 and 6.8).

Fig. 6.4: Tropical Deciduous Forests

Let's do

- Where in India do tropical evergreen and tropical deciduous forests occur? Name the states.
- Which type of forest dominates most part of India?

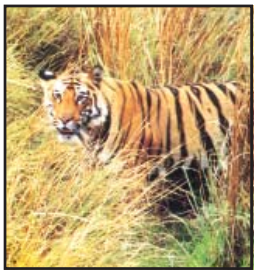


Fig. 6.5: Tiger

Fig. 6.6: Golden Langoor

Temperate Evergreen Forests

The temperate evergreen forests are located in the mid-latitudinal coastal region (Fig. 6.7). They are commonly found along the eastern margin of the continents, e.g., In south east USA, South China and in South East Brazil. They comprise both hard and soft wood trees like oak, pine, eucalyptus, etc.

Fig. 6.7: Temperate Evergreen Forest

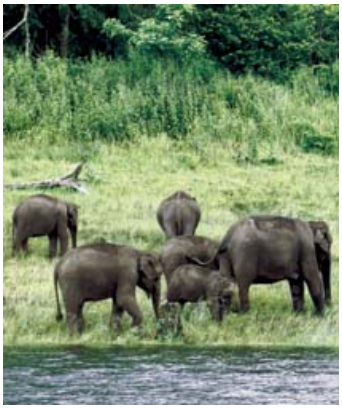


Fig. 6.8: Elephants

Fig. 6.9: Pheasant

Fig. 6.10: Monal

Temperate Deciduous Forests

As we go towards higher latitudes, there are more temperate deciduous forests (Fig. 6.11). These are found in the north eastern part of USA, China, New Zealand, Chile and also found in the coastal regions of Western Europe. They shed their leaves in the dry season. The common trees are oak, ash, beech, etc. Deer, foxes, wolves are the animals commonly found. Birds like pheasants, monals are also found here (Fig. 6.9 and 6.10).

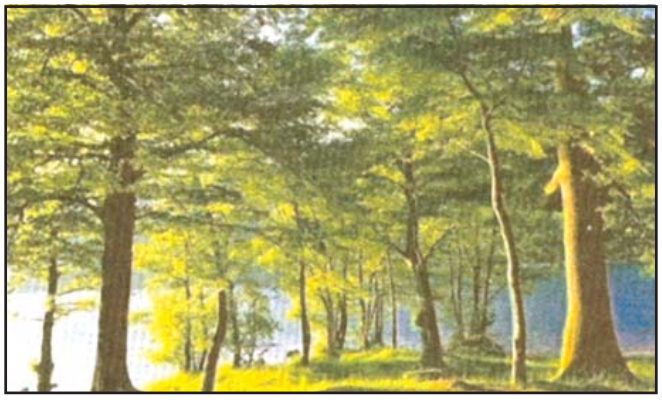


Fig. 6.11: Temperate Deciduous Forest

Do you know?

- Mediterranean trees adapt themselves to dry summers with the help of their thick barks and wax coated leaves which help them reduce transpiration.
- Mediterranean regions are known as 'Orchards of the world' for their fruit cultivation.

Mediterranean Vegetation

You have learnt that most of the east and north east margins of the continents are covered by temperate evergreen and deciduous trees. The west and south west margins of the continents are different. They have Mediterranean vegetation (Fig. 6.12). It is mostly found in the areas around the Mediterranean sea in Europe, Africa and Asia, hence the name. This kind of vegetation is also found outside the actual Mediterranean region in California in the USA, south west Africa, south western

Fig. 6.12: A vineyard in the Mediterranean Region

South America and South west Australia. These regions are marked for hot dry summers and mild rainy winters. Citrus fruits such as oranges, figs, olives and grapes are commonly cultivated here because people have removed the natural vegetation in order to cultivate what they want to. There isn't much wildlife here.

Coniferous Forests

In the higher latitudes (50° – 70°) of Northern hemisphere the spectacular Coniferous forests are found (Fig. 6.13 a and b). These are also called as Taiga. These forests are also seen in the higher altitudes. These are the trees which Salima found in the Himalayas in abundance. They are tall, softwood evergreen trees. These woods are very useful for making pulp, which is used for manufacturing paper and newsprint. Match boxes and packing boxes are also made from softwood. Chir, pine, cedar are the important variety of trees in these forests. Silver fox, mink, polar bear are the common animals found here.

Let's do

- Look around in your surroundings and find out the articles made of hard wood and soft wood.
- Find out and learn few names of trees of your locality.

Do you know?

Taiga means pure or untouched in the Russian language

Fig. 6.13 (a): Coniferous Forest

Fig. 6.13 (b): Snow covered Coniferous Forest

Grasslands

Tropical grasslands: These grow on either side of the equator and extend till the tropics (Fig. 6.14). This vegetation grows in the areas of moderate to low amount of rainfall. They can grow very tall, about 3 to 4 metres in height. Savannah grasslands of Africa are of this type. Elephants, zebras, giraffes, deer, leopards are common in tropical grasslands (Fig. 6.15).

Fig. 6.14: Tropical Grassland

Fig. 6.15: Giraffes

Do you know?

Grasslands are known by different names in different regions.

Tropical Grasslands

East Africa- Savanna
Brazil- Campos
Venezuela- Llanos

Temperate Grasslands

Argentina- Pampas
N. America- Prairie
S. Africa- Veld
C. Asia- Steppe
Australia- Down

Temperate grasslands: These are found in the mid-latitudinal zones and in the interior part of the continents. Usually, grass here is short and nutritious.Wild buffaloes, bisons, antilopes are common in the temperate region.

Thorny bushes: These are found in the dry desert like regions.Tropical deserts are located in the western margins of the continents. The vegetation cover is scarce here because of scanty rain and scorching heat. Identify the desert regions in the world map given. Can you name the great desert of India? Name some of the common animals of the desert which you have learnt earlier.

If you reach the polar region you will find the place extremely cold. The growth of natural vegetation is very limited here. Only mosses, lichens and very small shrubs are found here. It grows during the very short summer. This is called **Tundra** type of vegetation. This vegetation is found in the polar areas of Europe, Asia and North America. The animals have thick fur and thick skin to protect themselves from the cold climatic conditions, seal, walruses, musk-oxen, Arctic owl, Polar bear and snow foxes are some of the animals found here (Fig. 6.16).

Salima's father showed her some photographs of thick forests. In some of the photographs, Salima observed that people were cutting trees and clearing the forests. Her father explained that the local people wanted their land for agriculture and settlements, so they cleared up the forests. Salima started wondering forests are cleared, then where will the wild lives go? Will the forest take its original shape again? If people go on cutting the trees like these, will there be enough oxygen, water vapour, timbers, fruits, nuts available in future?

Walrus

Polar Bear

Seal

Fig. 6.16

Do you agree with Salima? Hold a discussion with your friends about the depletion of our diversified flora and fauna. Suggest some measures to conserve them.

1. Answer the following questions.

(i) Which are the two factors on which the growth of vegetation mostly depends?

(ii) Which are the three broad categories of natural vegetation?

(iii) Name the two hardwood trees commonly found in tropical evergreen forest.

(iv) In which part of the world and tropical deciduous forest is found?

(v) In which climatic conditions, citrus fruits cultivated?

(vi) Mention the uses of coniferous forest.

(vii) In which part of the world is seasonal grassland is found?

2. Tick the correct answer.

(i) Mosses and Lichens are found in:
- (a) Desertic Vegetation
- (b) Tropical evergreen forest
- (c) Tundra vegetation

(ii) Thorny bushes are found in:
- (a) Hot and humid tropical climate
- (b) Hot and dry desertic climate
- (c) Cold polar climate

(iii) In tropical evergreen forest, one of the common animals is:
(a) Monkey (b) Girraffe (c) Camel

(iv) One important variety of coniferous forest is:
(a) Rosewood (b) Pine (c) Teak

(v) Steppe grassland is found in
(a) S. Africa (b) Australia (c) Russia

3. Match the following.

(i) Walrus	(a) Soft wood tree
(ii) Cedar	(b) An animal of tropical deciduous forest
(iii) Olives	(c) A polar animal
(iv) Elephants	(d) Temperate grassland in Antarctica
(v) Campos	(e) A citrus fruit
(vi) Downs	(f) Tropical grassland of Brazil

4. Give reasons.

(i) The animals in polar region have thick fur and thick skin.

(ii) Tropical deciduous trees shed their leaves in the dry season.

(iii) The type and thickness of vegetation changes from place to place.

5. Activity.

(i) Collect pictures and photographs of forests and grasslands of different parts of world. Write one sentence below each picture.

(ii) Make a collage of rainforest, grassland and coniferous forests.

6. For fun.

In the crossword table given below, some words are hidden. They are all about vegetation and wildllife and are to be found horizontally and vertically. Two have been worked out for you. Work in pairs with a friend.

M	T	N	L	P	L	M	E	H	R	T	B	A	M	B	O	O	P	N	A
B	**E**	**A**	**R**	A	I	X	S	E	E	R	C	M	W	H	A	L	E	D	C
T	L	P	F	L	O	R	A	N	L	E	O	P	A	R	D	C	E	E	M
A	E	I	A	M	N	L	I	C	H	E	N	S	L	F	O	A	P	E	S
N	P	G	U	D	O	G	R	T	Z	X	E	D	R	H	X	M	A	R	J
A	H	T	N	H	N	D	P	I	N	E	S	C	U	I	V	E	L	D	K
C	A	C	A	M	P	O	S	G	V	**N**	N	A	S	E	A	L	M	Q	U
O	N	A	C	F	O	W	L	E	E	**E**	A	C	D	E	O	D	A	R	M
N	T	C	H	I	R	N	G	R	V	**E**	K	T	M	O	S	S	E	S	O
D	O	T	E	A	K	S	R	S	E	**M**	E	U	S	A	P	C	G	A	N
A	X	U	R	M	A	A	N	G	R	A	S	S	W	K	A	R	Q	V	K
P	S	S	B	H	F	T	A	I	G	A	T	U	L	S	I	U	Y	A	E
G	H	F	I	R	P	R	A	I	R	I	E	S	A	B	E	B	O	N	Y
B	R	B	R	G	O	A	T	D	E	C	I	D	U	O	U	S	W	N	A
T	U	N	D	R	A	X	Z	E	B	R	A	H	O	R	S	E	L	A	K
C	B	E	E	A	X	L	L	A	N	O	S	A	T	P	A	M	P	A	S

2 Land, Soil, Water, Natural Vegetation and Wildlife Resources

In a small village in Tanzania, Africa, Mamba gets up very early in the morning to fetch water. She has to walk a long way and returns after a few hours. She then helps her mother in the house and joins her brothers in taking care of their goats. All her family owns is a piece of rocky land around their small hut. Mamba's father can barely grow some maize and beans on it after toiling hard. This is not enough to feed their family for the whole year.

Peter lives in the heart of the sheep rearing region in New Zealand where his family runs a wool processing factory. Everyday when he returns from school, Peter watches his uncle taking care of their sheep. Their sheep yard is situated on a wide grassy plain with hills in the far distance. It is managed in a scientific way using the latest technology. Peter's family also grows vegetables through organic farming.

Mamba and Peter stay in two different parts of the world and lead very different lives. This difference is because of the differences in the quality of land, soil, water, natural vegetation, animals and the usage of technology. The availability of such resources is the main reason places differ from each other.

Let's do

Observe the land, type of soil and water availability in the region you live. Discuss in your class, how it has influenced the lifestyle of people there.

Do you know?

Ninety per cent of the world population occupies only thirty per cent of land area. The remaining seventy per cent of the land is either sparsely populated or uninhabited.

Land

Land is among the most important natural resources. It covers only about thirty per cent of the total area of the earth's surface and all parts of this small percentage are not habitable.

The uneven distribution of population in different parts of the world is mainly due to varied characteristics of land and climate. The rugged topography, steep slopes of the mountains, low-lying areas susceptible to water

logging, desert areas, thick forested areas are normally sparsely populated or uninhabited. Plains and river valleys offer suitable land for agriculture. Hence, these are the densely populated areas of the world.

Land Use

Land is used for different purposes such as agriculture, forestry, mining, building houses, roads and setting up of industries. This is commonly termed as **Land use**. Can you list out the different ways in which Mamba's and Peter's family use their land?

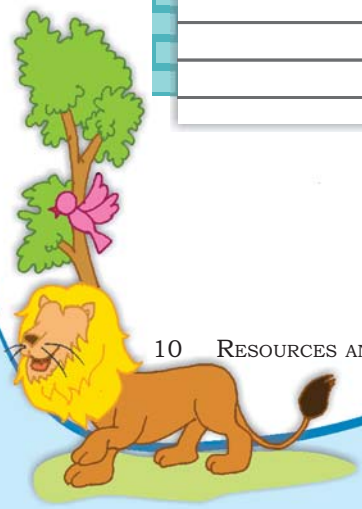
The use of land is determined by physical factors such as topography, soil, climate, minerals and availability of water. Human factors such as population and technology are also important determinants of land use pattern.

Fig. 2.1: *Salzburg in Austria*
Notice in how many ways the land has been used in the above picture.

Table 2.1 : Land use in selected countries

Countries	Percentage of area in			
	Cropland	Pasture	Forest	Other Use
Australia	6	**56**	14	24
Brazil	9	20	66	5
Canada	5	4	39	**52**
China	10	34	14	42
France	35	21	27	17
India	**57**	4	22	17
Japan	12	2	**67**	19
Russia	8	5	44	44
UK	29	46	10	16
USA	21	26	32	21
World	**11**	**26**	**31**	**32**

Study the above table and answer the following:
(i) Name the countries having the highest percentage of land under cropland, forest, pasture and other uses.
(ii) How would you relate the land use patterns of these countries with the probable economic activities?



Land can also be divided on the basis of private land and community land. Private land is owned by individuals whereas, community land is owned by the community for common uses like collection of fodder, fruits, nuts or medicinal herbs. These community lands are also called **common property resources**.

People and their demands are ever growing but the availability of land is limited. The quality of land also differs from place to place. People started encroaching the common lands to build up commercial areas, housing complexes in the urban areas and to expand the agricultural land in the rural areas. Today the vast changes in the land use pattern also reflect the cultural changes in our society. Land degradation, landslides, soil erosion, desertification are the major threats to the environment because of the expansion of agriculture and constructional activities.

Let's do

Talk to some elderly person in your family or neighbourhood and collect information about changes in the land use over years, where you live. Display your findings on a bulletin board in your classroom.

Fig. 2.2: Change in land use over time

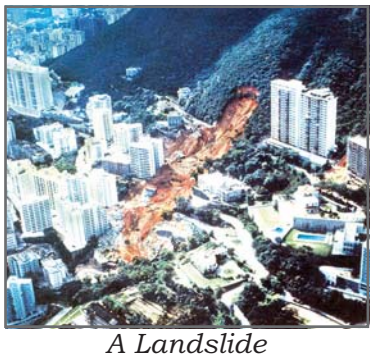
Conservation of Land Resource

Growing population and their ever growing demand has led to a large scale destruction of forest cover and arable land and has created a fear of losing this natural

resource. Therefore, the present rate of degradation of land resources must be checked. Afforestation, land reclamation, regulated use of chemical pesticide and fertilisers and checks on overgrazing are some of the common methods used to conserve land.

Landslides

Landslides are simply defined as the mass movement of rock, debris or earth down a slope. They often take place in conjunction with earthquakes, floods and volcanoes. A prolonged spell of rainfall can cause heavy landslide that can block the flow of river for quite some time. The formation of river blocks can cause havoc to the settlements downstream on its bursting. In the hilly terrain landslides have been a major and widely spread natural disaster that often strike life and property and occupy a position of major concern.



A Landslide

A Case Study

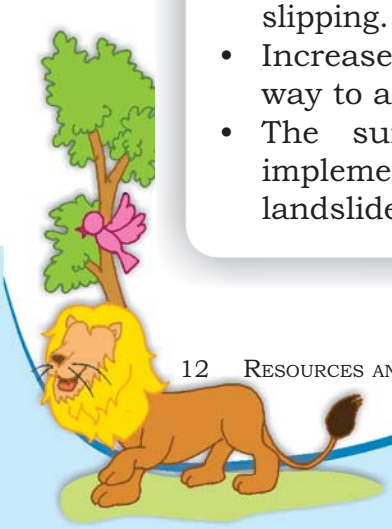
A massive landslide hit Pangi village near Reckong Peo in Kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh and damaged a 200-meter stretch of old Hindustan-Tibet road, National Highway - 22. This landslide was triggered by intense blasting at Pangi village. Due to the blasting this weak zone of slope collapsed and caused intense damage to the road and nearby villages. The Pangi village was completely vacated to avoid any possible loss of life.

Mitigation Mechanism

Advancement in scientific techniques has empowered us to understand what factors cause landslides and how to manage them. Some broad mitigation techniques of landslide are as follows:

- Hazard mapping locate areas prone to landslides. Hence, such areas can be avoided for building settlements.
- Construction of retention wall to stop land from slipping.
- Increase in the vegetation cover is an effective way to arrest landslide.
- The surface drainage control works are implemented to control the movement of landslide along with rain water and spring flows.

Retention Wall



Soil

The thin layer of grainy substance covering the surface of the earth is called soil. It is closely linked to land. Landforms determine the type of soil. Soil is made up of organic matter, minerals and weathered rocks found on the earth. This happens through the process of weathering. The right mix of minerals and organic matter make the soil fertile.

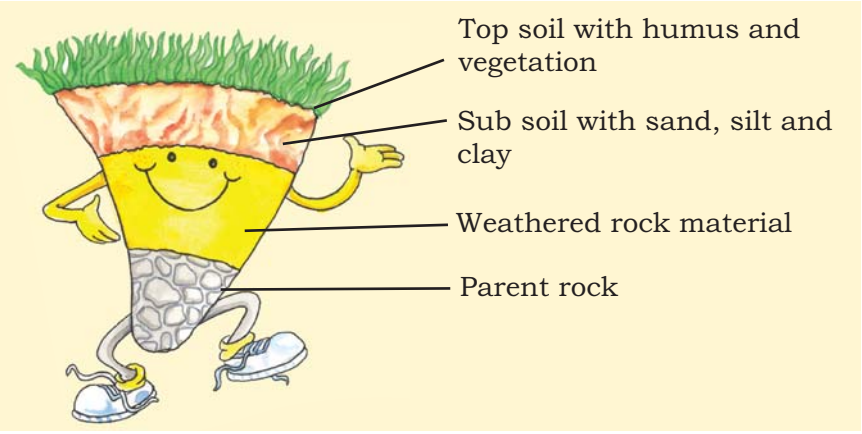


Fig. 2.3: Soil Profile

Glossary

Weathering
The breaking up and decay of exposed rocks, by temperature changes, frost action, plants, animals and man.

Do you know?

It takes hundreds of years to make just one centimetre of **soil**.

Factors of Soil Formation

The major factors of **soil formation** are the nature of the parent rock and climatic factors. Other factors are the topography, role of organic material and time taken for the composition of soil formation. All these differ from place to place.

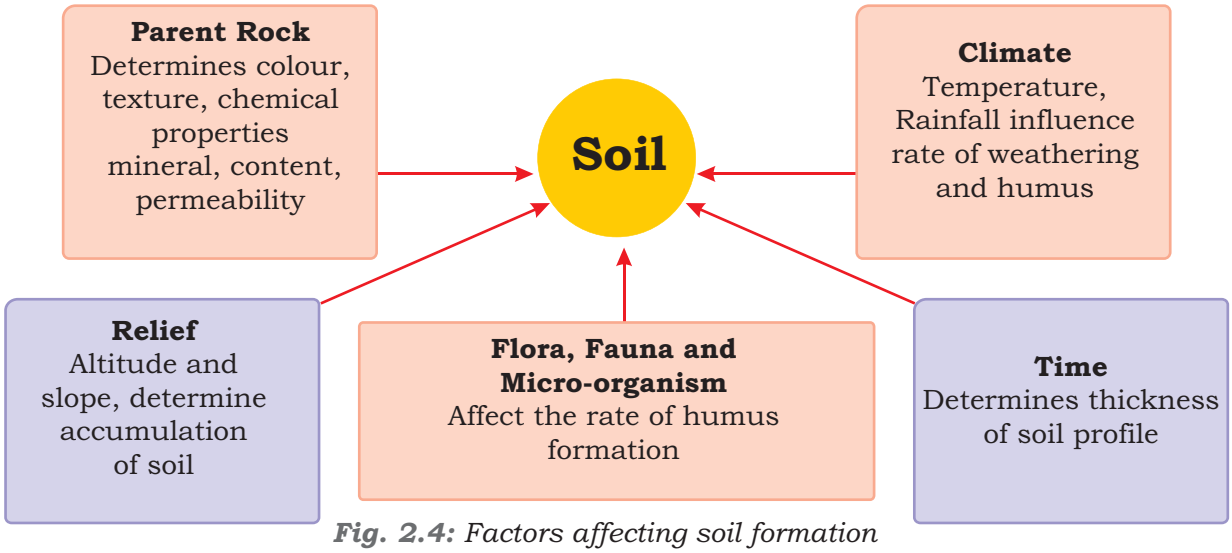


Fig. 2.4: Factors affecting soil formation

Activity

In India soils could be alluvial, black, red, laterite, desertic and mountain soil. Collect a handful of different types of soil and observe how they are different?

Degradation of Soil and Conservation Measures

Soil erosion and depletion are the major threats to soil as a resource. Both human and natural factors can lead to degradation of soils. Factors which lead to soil degradation are deforestation, overgrazing, overuse of chemical feritilisers or pesticides, rain wash, landslides and floods.

Some methods of soil conservation are

Mulching: The bare ground between plants is covered with a layer of organic matter like straw. It helps to retain soil moisture.

Contour barriers: Stones, grass, soil are used to build barriers along contours. Trenches are made in front of the barriers to collect water.

Rock dam: Rocks are piled up to slow down the flow of water. This prevents gullies and further soil loss.

Fig 2.5: *Terrace Farming*

Fig 2.6: *Contour Ploughing*

Fig 2.7: *Shelter Belts*

Terrace farming: These are made on the steep slopes so that flat surfaces are available to grow crops. They can reduce surface run-off and soil erosion (Fig. 2.5).

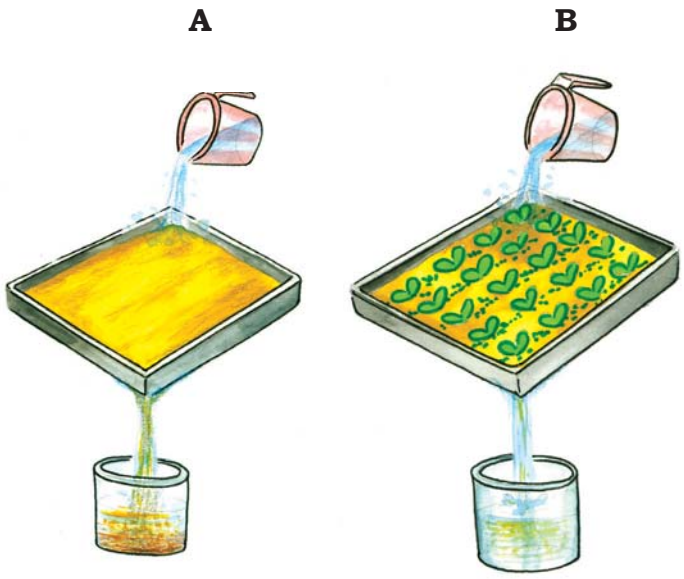
Intercropping: Different crops are grown in alternate rows and are sown at different times to protect the soil from rain wash.

Contour ploughing: Ploughing parallel to the contours of a hill slope to form a natural barrier for water to flow down the slope (Fig. 2.6).

Shelter belts: In the coastal and dry regions, rows of trees are planted to check the wind movement to protect soil cover (Fig. 2.7).

Activity

Take two trays A and B of same size. Make six holes in the end of these trays and then fill them with the same amount of soil. Leave the soil in tray A bare while grow grass in tray B. When the grass in tray B has grown few centimetres high, place both the trays in such a way that they are on a slope. Pour one mug of water from the same height into trays. Collect the muddy water that trickles down the holes of both trays in two separate containers and compare how much soil is washed out of each tray?



Water

Water is a vital renewable natural resource. Three-fourth's of the earth's surface is covered with water. It is therefore appropriately called the 'water planet'. It was in the primitive oceans that life began almost 3.5 billion years back. Even today, the oceans cover two-thirds of the earth's surface and support a rich variety of plant and animal life. The ocean water is however saline and not fit for human consumption. Fresh water accounts for only about 2.7 per cent. Nearly 70 per cent of this occurs as ice sheets and glaciers in Antarctica, Greenland and mountain regions. Due to their location they are inaccessible. Only 1 per cent of freshwater is available and fit for human use. It is found as ground water, as surface water in rivers and lakes and as water vapour in the atmosphere.

Do you know?
In 1975, the consumption of water for human use was 3850cu km/year. It soared to more than 6000 cu km/year in the year 2000.

Fresh water is therefore, the most precious substance on earth. Water can neither be added nor subtracted from the earth. Its total volume remains constant. Its abundance only seems to vary because it is in constant motion, cycling through the oceans, the air, the land and back again, through the processes of evaporation, precipitation and run-off. This as you already know is referred to as the 'water cycle'.

Do you know?
A dripping tap wastes1200 litres in a year.

Humans use huge amounts of water not only for drinking and washing but also in the process of production. Water for agriculture, industries, generating electricity through reservoirs of dams are the other usages. Increasing population, rising demands for food and cash crops, increasing urbanisation and rising standards of living are the major factors leading to shortages in supply of fresh water either due to drying up of water sources or water pollution.

Activity

An average urban Indian uses about 135 litres of water every day.

Use	Litres per person per day
Drinking	3
Cooking	4
Bathing	20
Flushing	40
Washing clothes	40
Washing utensils	20
Gardening	23
Total	**135**

Can you suggest some ways to bring down this use?

Do you know?

Have you ever heard about a water market? Amreli city in Saurastra region with a population of 1.25 lakhs is completely dependent on purchasing water from the nearby talukas.

Problems of Water Availability

There is scarcity of water in many regions of the world. Most of Africa, West Asia, South Asia, parts of western USA, north-west Mexico, parts of South America and entire Australia are facing shortages in fresh water supply. Countries located in climatic zones most susceptible to droughts face great problems of water scarcity. Thus, water shortage may be a consequence of variation in seasonal or annual precipitation or the scarcity is caused by over-exploitation and contamination of water sources.

Fig 2.8: Yamuna is getting polluted due to sewage, industrial effluents and garbage

Conservation of Water Resources

Access to clean and adequate water sources is a major problem facing the world today. Steps have to be taken to conserve this dwindling resource. Even though water is a renewable resource, its overuse and pollution make it unfit for use. Discharge of untreated or partially treated sewage, agricultural chemicals and industrial effluents in water bodies are major contaminants. They pollute water with nitrates, metals and pesticides.

Most of these chemicals being non-biodegradable reach human bodies through water. Water pollution can be controlled by treating these effluents suitably before releasing them in water bodies.

Forest and other vegetation cover slow the surface runoff and replenish underground water. Water harvesting is another method to save surface runoff. Water is used for irrigating fields. The canals should be properly lined to minimise losses by water seepage. Sprinklers effectively irrigate the area by checking water losses through seepage and evaporation. In dry regions with high rates of evaporation, drip or trickle irrigation is very useful. The valuable water resource can therefore be conserved by adopting these means of conservation.

Fig 2.9: *A Water Sprinkler*

Do you know?

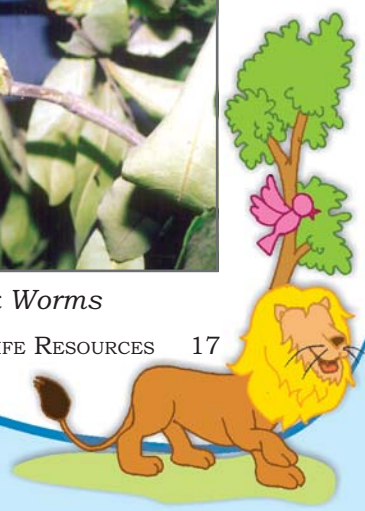
Rain water harvesting is the process of collecting rain water from roof tops and directing it to an appropriate location and storing if for future use. On an average, one spell of rain for two hours is enough to save 8,000 litres of water.

Natural Vegetation and Wildlife

Some school children were visiting an exhibition on handicrafts. The articles in the exhibition were collected from different parts of the country. Mona picked up a bag and exclaimed, "This is a beautiful handbag!" "Yes, it is made from Jute," the teacher said. "Do you see those baskets, lamp shades and chairs? Those are made of canes and bamboos. In the eastern and north eastern humid regions of India, bamboo grows in plenty." Jassy was excited to see a silk scarf. "See this beautiful scarf". The teacher explained that silk is obtained from silk worms that are bred on Mulberry trees. The children understood that plants provide us with many different products that we use in our day-to-day life.

Natural vegetation and wildlife exist only in the narrow zone of contact between the lithosphere, hydrosphere and atmosphere that we call **biosphere**. In the biosphere living beings are inter-related and interdependent on each other for survival. This life supporting system is known as the **ecosystem**. Vegetation and wildlife are valuable resources. Plants provide us with timber, give shelter to animals, produce oxygen we breathe, protects soils so essential for growing crops, act as shelter belts, help in

Fig 2.10: *Silk Worms*



storage of underground water, give us fruits, nuts, latex, turpentine oil, gum, medicinal plants and also the paper that is so essential for your studies. There are innumerable uses of plants and you can add some more.

Wildlife includes animals, birds, insects as well as the aquatic life forms. They provide us milk, meat, hides and wool. Insects like bees provide us honey, help in pollination of flowers and have an important role to play as decomposers in the ecosystem. The birds feed on insects and act as decomposers as well. Vulture due to its ability to feed on dead livestock is a scavenger and considered a vital cleanser of the environment. So animals big or small, all are integral to maintaining balance in the ecosystem.

Fig 2.11: *Brahma Kamal a Medicinal Herb*

Fig 2.12: *A Blue Kingfisher*

Do you know?

Vultures in the Indian subcontinent were dying of kidney failure shortly after scavenging livestock treated with diclofenac, a painkiller that is similar to aspirin or ibuprofen. Efforts are on to ban the drug for livestock use and breed vultures in captivity.

Distribution of Natural Vegetation

The growth of vegetation depends primarily on temperature and moisture. The major vegetation types of the world are grouped as forests, grasslands, scrubs and tundra.

In areas of heavy rainfall, huge trees may thrive. The forests are thus associated with areas having abundant water supply. As the amount of moisture decreases the size of trees and their density reduces. In the regions of moderate rainfall short stunted trees and grasses grow forming the grasslands of the world. In dry areas of low rainfall, thorny shrubs and scrubs grow. In such areas plants have deep roots and

Fig. 2.13: *Grassland and Forest*

leaves have thorny and waxy surface to reduce loss of moisture by transpiration. Tundra vegetation of cold Polar Regions comprise of mosses and lichens.

Forests are broadly classified as **evergreen** and **deciduous** depending on when they shed their leaves. Evergreen forests do not shed their leaves simultaneously in any season of the year. Deciduous forests shed their leaves in a particular season to conserve loss of moisture through transpiration. These forests are further classified as tropical or temperate based on their location in different latitudes. You have learnt in detail about the various forest types, their distribution and the associated animal life in the previous class.

Today there are many more people in the world than there were two centuries back. To feed the growing numbers, large areas of forests have been cleared to grow crops. Forest cover all over the world is vanishing rapidly. There is an urgent need to conserve this valuable resource.

Fig. 2.14: *A Python in a forest*

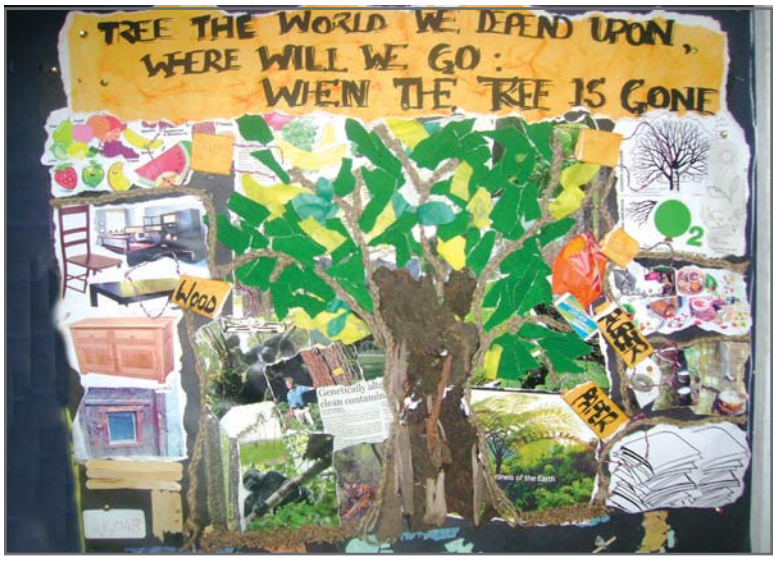


Fig. 2.15: *A collage of a forest made by school students*

Conservation of Natural Vegetation and Wildlife

Forests are our wealth. Plants give shelter to the animals and together they maintain the ecosystem. Changes of climate and human interferences can cause the loss of natural habitats for the plants and animals. Many species have become vulnerable or endangered and some are on the verge of extinction. Deforestation, soil erosion, constructional activities, forest fires, tsunami and landslides are some of the human made and natural factors which

Fig. 2.16: *Loss of rainforest in Great Nicobar after Tsunami*

Fig. 2.17: Black buck also needs protection

together accelerate the process of extinction of these great natural resources. One of the major concerns is the increasing incidents of poaching that result in a sharp decline in the number of particular species. The animals are poached for collection and illegal trade of hides, skins, nails, teeth, horns as well as feathers. Some of these animals are tiger, lion, elephant, deer, black buck, crocodile, rhinoceros, snow leopard, ostrich and peacock. These can be conserved by increasing awareness.

Forest Fire

Activity

Read the news item and find out how fire started in California ? Could it be avoided?

Know More

Forest fire is a threat to entire region of fauna and flora. It occurs mainly due to three reasons.

1. Natural fire due to lightening etc.
2. Fire due to heat generated in the litter due to carelessness of people.
3. Purposely caused fire by local inhabitants.

Some Control Measures

1. Prevention of human-caused fires through education.
2. Prompt detection of fires through well co-ordinated network of obsevation points, efficient ground patroling and communication network.

National parks, wildlife sanctuaries, biosphere reserves are made to protect our natural vegetation and wildlife. Conservation of creeks, lakes, and wetlands is necessary to save the precious resource from depletion

There is a balance in the environment if the relative number of species is not disturbed. Human activities in several parts of the world have disturbed the natural habitats of many species. Due to indiscriminate killings, several birds and animals have either become extinct or are on the verge of extinction.

Awareness programmes like social forestry and *Vanamohatasava* should be encouraged at the regional and community level. School children should be encouraged for bird watching and visiting nature camps so that they appreciate the habitat of varied species.

Many countries have passed laws declaring that the trades as well as killing of birds and animals are illegal. In India, killing of lions, tigers, deers, great Indian bustards and peacocks have been banned

An international convention CITES has been established that lists several species of animals and birds in which trade is prohibited. Conservation of plants and animals is an ethical duty of every citizen.

Glossary

National Park
A natural area designated to protect the ecological integrity of one or more ecosystems for present and future generations

Fig. 2:18: *Herd of Cheetals*

Fig. 2:19: *Elephant herd in Kaziranga National Park*

Glossary

Biosphere reserves
Series of protected areas linked through a global network, intended to demonstrate the relationship between conservation and development.

Do you know?

CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) is an international agreement between governments. It aims to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. Roughly 5,000 species of animals and 28,000 species of plants are protected. Bears, dolphins, cacti, corals, orchids and aloes are some examples.

Exercises

1. Answer the following questions.

(i) Which are the two main climatic factors responsible for soil formation?

(ii) Write any two reasons for land degradation today.

(iii) Why is land considered an important resource?

(iv) Name any two steps that government has taken to conserve plants and animals.

(v) Suggest three ways to conserve water.

2. Tick the correct answer.

(i) Which one of the following is NOT a factor of soil formation?

(a) time (b) soil texture (c) organic matter

(ii) Which one of the following methods is most appropriate to check soil erosion on steep slopes?

(a) shelter belts (b) mulching (c) terrace cultivation

(iii) Which one of the following is NOT in favour of the conservation of nature?

(a) switch off the bulb when not in use

(b) close the tap immediately after using

(c) dispose polypacks after shopping

3. Match the followings.

(i) Land use	(a) prevent soil erosion
(ii) Humus	(b) land suitable for agriculture
(iii) Rock dams	(c) productive use of land
(iv) Arable land	(d) organic matter deposited on top soil
	(e) contour ploughing

4. State whether the given statement is true or false. If true, write the reasons.

(i) Ganga–Brahmaputra plain of India is an overpopulated region.

(ii) Water availability per person in India is declining.

(iii) Rows of trees planted in the coastal areas to check the wind movement is called intercropping.

(iv) Human interference and changes of climate can maintain the ecosystem.

5. Activity

Discuss some more reasons which are responsible for changes of land use pattern. Has your place undergone any change in the land use pattern?

Find out from your parents and elderly people. You can conduct an interview by asking the following questions.

Place	When your grand parent's were in their 30's	When your parents were in their 30's	Why do you think this is happening?	Are common areas and open spaces disappearing?
Rural				
Number of cattle and poultry owned				
Number of trees and ponds in the village				
Main occupation of the head of the family				
Urban				
Number of cars owned				
Number of rooms in the house				
Number of metalled roads				
Number of flyovers in the city				
Number of parks and playgrounds				

Based on the table you have just completed, draw a picture of land use patterns that you foresee in your neighbourhood after 20 years. Why do you think that land use patterns change over the years?

5

Natural Vegetation and Wild Life

Have you observed the type of trees, bushes, grasses and birds in the fields and parks in and around your school? Are they similar or there are variations? India being a vast country you can imagine the types of bio-forms available through out the country.

Our country India is one of the twelve mega bio-diversity countries of the world. With about 47,000 plant species India occupies tenth place in the world and fourth in Asia in plant diversity. There are about 15,000 flowering plants in India which account for 6 per cent in the world's total number of flowering plants. The country has many non-flowering plants such as ferns, algae and fungi. India also has 89,000 species of animals as well as a rich variety of fish in its fresh and marine waters.

Natural vegetation refers to a plant community which has grown naturally without human aid and has been left undisturbed by humans for a long time. This is termed as a **virgin vegetation**. Thus, cultivated crops and fruits, orchards form part of vegetation but not natural vegetation.

Do You Know?

The virgin vegetation, which are purely Indian are known as endemic or indigenous species but those which have come from outside India are termed as exotic plants.

The term **flora** is used to denote plants of a particular region or period. Similarly, the species of animals are referred to as **fauna**. This huge diversity in flora and fauna kingdom is due to the following factors.

Relief

Land

Land affects the natural vegetation directly and indirectly. Do you expect the same type of vegetation in mountainous, plateau and plain areas or in dry and wet regions? The nature of land influences the type of vegetation. The fertile level is generally devoted to agriculture. The undulating and rough terrains are areas where grassland and woodlands develop and give shelter to a variety of wild life.

Soil

The soils also vary over space. Different types of soils provide basis for different types of vegetation. The sandy soils of the desert support cactus and thorny bushes while wet, marshy, deltaic soils support mangroves and deltaic vegetation. The hill slopes with some depth of soil have conical trees.

Climate

Temperature

The character and extent of vegetation are mainly determined by temperature along with humidity in the air, precipitation and soil. On the slopes of the Himalayas and the hills of the Peninsula above the height of 915 metres, the fall in the temperature affects the types of vegetation and its growth, and changes it from tropical to subtropical temperate and alpine vegetation.

Table 5.1 : Temperature Characteristics of the Vegetation Zones

Vegetation Zones	*Mean annual Average Temp. (in degree C)*	*Mean Temp. inJan. in degrees C*	*Remarks*
Tropical	Above 24°C	Above 18°	No Frost
Sub-tropical	17°C to 24°C	10°C to 18°C	Frost is rare
Temperate	7°C to 17° C	-1°C to (-10) °C	Frost some snow
Alpine	Below 7°C	Below–1°C	Snow

Source : Environment Atlas of India, June 2001, Central Pollution Control Board Delhi

Photoperiod *(Sunlight)*

The variation in duration of sunlight at different places is due to differences in latitude, altitude, season and duration of the day. Due to longer duration of sunlight, trees grow faster in summer.

Find out Why are the southern slopes in Himalayan region covered with thick vegetation cover as compared to northern slopes of the same hills?

Precipitation

In India almost the entire rainfall is brought in by the advancing southwest monsoon (June to September) and retreating northeast monsoons. Areas of heavy rainfall have more dense vegetation as compared to other areas of less rainfall.

Find out Why have the western stopes of the western ghats covered with thick forests and not the eastern slopes?

Have you ever thought as to why forests are important for human beings? Forests are renewable resources and play a major role in enhancing the quality of environment. They modify local climate, control soil erosion, regulate stream flow, support a variety of industries, provide livelihood for many communities and offer panoramic or scenic view for recreation. It controls wind force and temperature and causes rainfall. It provides humus to the soil and shelter to the wild life. India's natural vegetation has undergone many changes due to several factors such as the growing demand for cultivated land, development of industries and mining, urbanisation and over-grazing of pastures.

Activity

Celebrate *Van Mahotsav* in your school/locality and plant few spalings and notice their growth

The vegetation cover of India in large parts is no more natural in the real sense. Except in some inaccessible regions like the Himalayas, the hilly region of central India and the *marusthali*, the vegetation of most of the areas has been modified at some places, or replaced or degraded by human occupancy.

Activity

Study the bar graph (Figure 5.1) and answer the following questions.

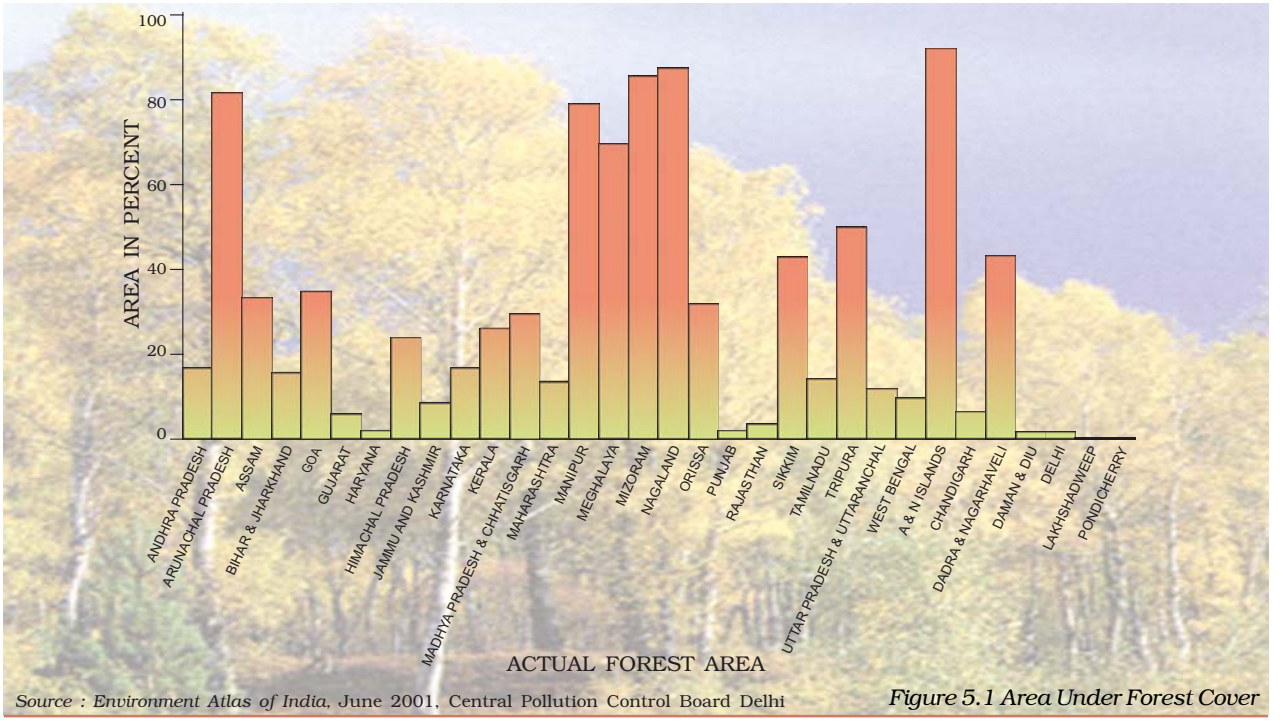
(i) Name the state having maximum area under forest cover.

(ii) Name the union territory having minimum area under forest cover and why?

Do You Know? In 2001, the actual forest cover in India was only 20.55 per cent.

Ecosystem

Plants occur in distinct groups of communities in areas having similar climatic conditions. The nature of the plants in an area, to a large extent, determines the animal life in that area. When the vegetation is altered, the animal life also changes. All the plants and animals in an area are interdependent and interrelated to each other in their physical environment, thus,



Source : Environment Atlas of India, June 2001, Central Pollution Control Board Delhi

Figure 5.1 Area Under Forest Cover

forming an ecosystem. Human beings are also an integral part of the ecosystem. How do the human beings influence the ecology of a region? They utilise the vegetation and wild life. The greed of human beings leads to over utilisation of these resources. They cut the trees and kill the animals creating ecological imbalance. As a result some of the plants and animals have reached the verge of extinction.

Do you know that a very large ecosystem on land having distinct types of vegetation and animal life is called a *biome.* The biomes are identified on the basis of plants.

Types of Vegetation

The following major types of vegetation may be identified in our country (Figure 5.3).

(i) Tropical Rain Forests
(ii) Tropical Deciduous Forests
(iii) Tropical Thorn Forests and Scrubs
(iv) Montane Forests
(v) Mangrove Forests

Tropical Rain Forests

These forests are restricted to heavy rainfall areas of the Western Ghats and the island groups of Lakshadweep, Andaman and Nicobar, upper parts of Assam and Tamil Nadu coast.

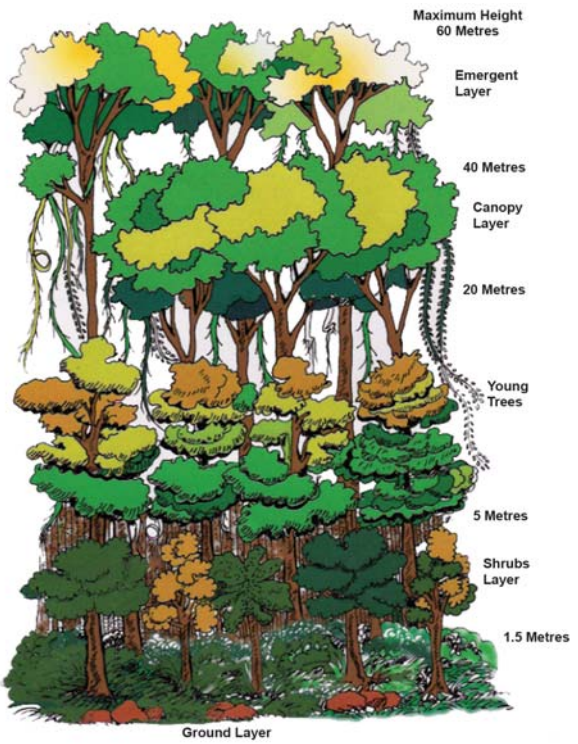


Figure 5.2 : Tropical Rain Forest

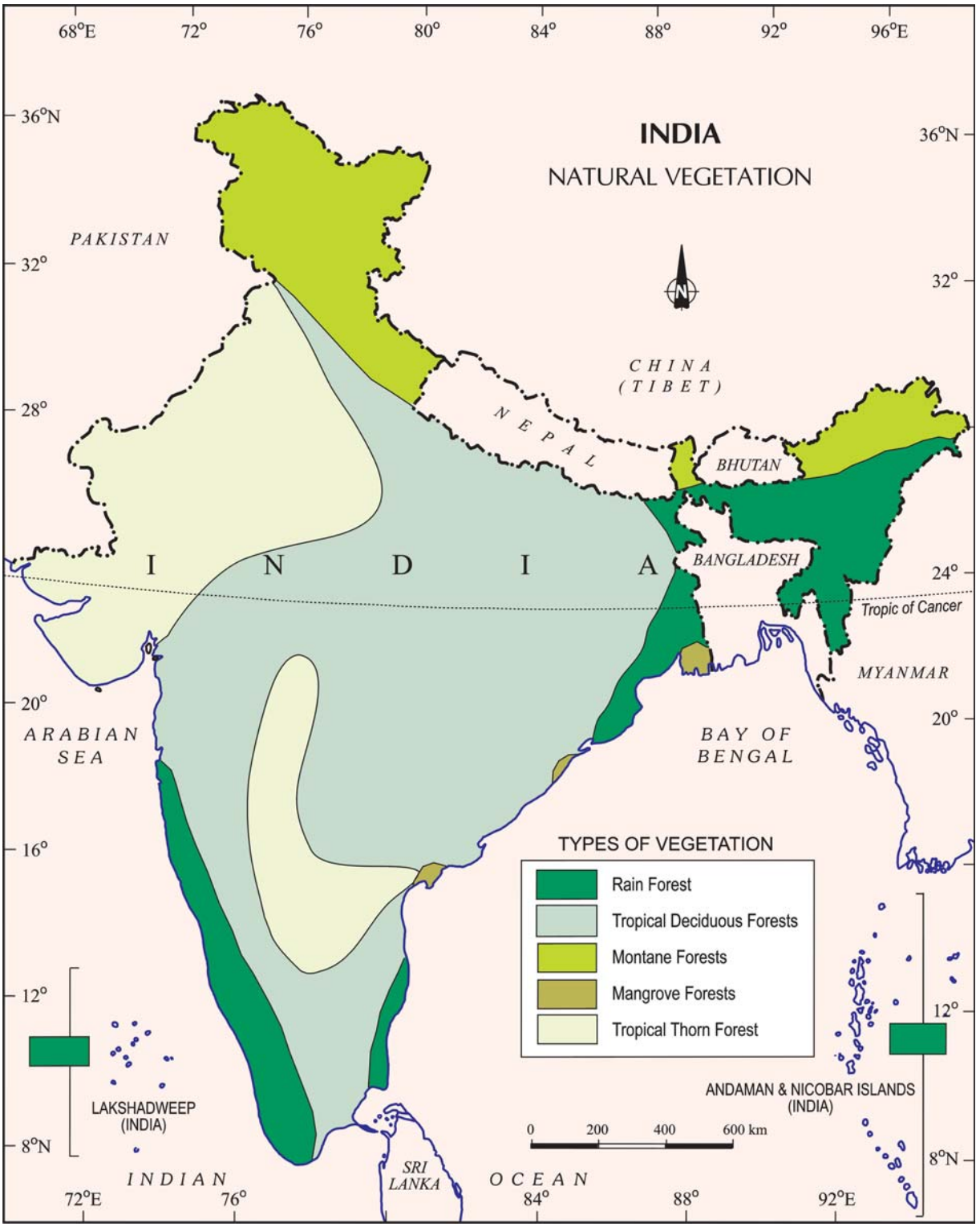


Figure 5.3 : Natural Vegetation

Study the given map for the forest cover and try to find the reasons as to why certain states have more area under forest as compared to others?

They are at their best in areas having more than 200 cm of rainfall with a short dry season. The trees reach great heights up to 60 metres or even above. Since the region is warm and wet throughout the year, it has a luxuriant vegetation of all kinds – trees, shrubs, and creepers giving it a multilayered structure. There is no definite time for trees to shed their leaves. As such, these forests appear green all the year round.

Some of the commercially important trees of this forest are ebony, mahogany, rosewood, rubber and cinchona.

The common animals found in these forests are elephants, monkey, lemur and deer. The one horned rhinoceros are found in the jungles of Assam and West Bengal. Besides these animals plenty of birds, bats, sloth, scorpions and snails are also found in these jungles.

Tropical Deciduous Forests

These are the most widespread forests of India. They are also called the monsoon forests and spread over the region receiving rainfall between 200 cm and 70 cm. Trees of this forest-type shed their leaves for about six to eight weeks in dry summer.

On the basis of the availability of water, these forests are further divided into moist and dry deciduous. The former is found in areas receiving rainfall between 200 and 100 cm. These forests exist, therefore, mostly in the eastern part of the country – northeastern states, along the foothills of the Himalayas, Jharkhand, West Orissa and Chhattisgarh, and on the eastern slopes of the Western Ghats. Teak is the most dominant species of this forest. *Bamboos, sal, shisham,* sandalwood, *khair, kusum, arjun,* mulberry are other commercially important species.

The dry deciduous forests are found in areas having rainfall between 100 cm and 70 cm. These forests are found in the rainier parts of the peninsular plateau and the plains of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. There are open stretches in which Teak, Sal, *Peepal, Neem* grow. A large part of this region has been cleared for cultivation and some parts are used for grazing.

Figure 5.4 : Tropical Deciduous Forest

In these forests, the common animals found are lion, tiger, pig, deer and elephant. A huge variety of birds, lizards, snakes, and tortoises are also found here.

The Thorn Forests and Scrubs

In regions with less than 70 cm of rainfall, the natural vegetation consists of thorny trees and bushes. This type of vegetation is found in the north-western part of the country including semi-arid areas of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana. Acacias, palms, euphorbias and cacti are the main plant species. Trees are scattered and have long roots penetrating deep into the soil in order to get moisture. The stems are succulent to conserve water. Leaves are mostly thick and small to minimize evaporation. These forests give way to thorn forests and scrubs in arid areas.

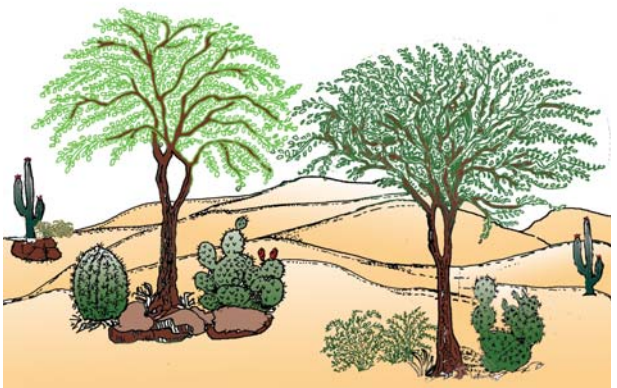


Figure 5.5 : Thorn Forests and Scrubs

In these forests, the common animals are rats, mice, rabbits, fox, wolf, tiger, lion, wild ass, horses and camels.

Montane Forests

In mountainous areas, the decrease in temperature with increasing altitude leads to the corresponding change in natural vegetation. As such, there is a succession of natural vegetation belts in the same order as we see from the tropical to the tundra region. The wet temperate type of forests are found between a height of 1000 and 2000 metres. Evergreen broad-leaf trees such as oaks and chestnuts predominate. Between 1500 and 3000 metres, temperate forests containing coniferous trees like pine, deodar, silver fir, spruce and cedar, are found. These forests cover mostly the southern slopes of the Himalayas, places having high altitude in southern and north-east India. At higher elevations, temperate grasslands are common. At high altitudes, generally more than 3,600 metres above sea-level, temperate forests and grasslands give way to the Alpine vegetation. Silver fir, junipers, pines and birches are the common trees of these forests. However, they get progressively stunted as they approach the snow-line. Ultimately through shrubs and scrubs, they merge into the Alpine grasslands. These are used extensively for grazing by nomadic tribes like the Gujjars and the Bakarwals. At higher altitudes, mosses and lichens form part of tundra vegetation.

Figure 5.6 : Montane Forests

The common animals found in these forests are Kashmir stag, spotted dear, wild sheep, jack rabbit, Tibetan antelope, yak, snow leopard, squirrels, Shaggy horn wild ibex, bear and rare red panda, sheep and goats with thick hair.

Mangrove Forests

The mangrove tidal forests are found in the areas of coasts influenced by tides. Mud and silt get accumutated on such coasts. Dense mangroves are the common varieties with roots of the plants submerged under water. The deltas of the Ganga, the Mahanadi, the Krishana, the Godavari and the Kaveri are covered by such vegetation. In the Ganga-Brahamaputra delta, sundari trees are found, which provide durable hard timber. Palm, coconut, keora, agar, also grow in some parts of the delta.

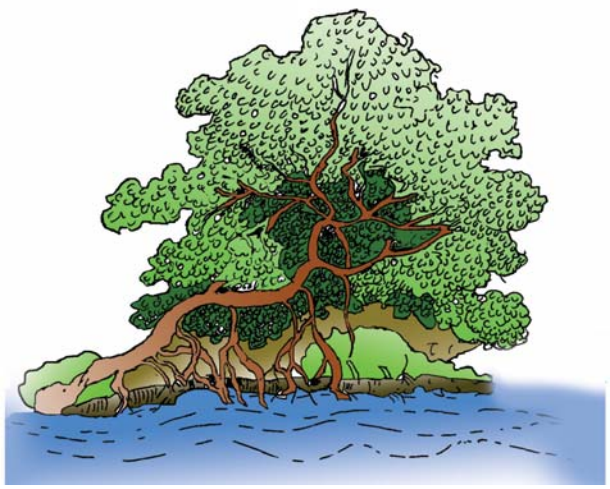


Figure 5.7 : Mangrove Forests

Royal Bengal Tiger is the famous animal in these forests. Turtles, crocodiles, gharials and snakes are also found in these forests.

Let us discuss : What will happen if plants and animals disappear from the earth's surface? can the human beings survive under such a situation? Why is bio-diversity necessary and why should it be conserved?

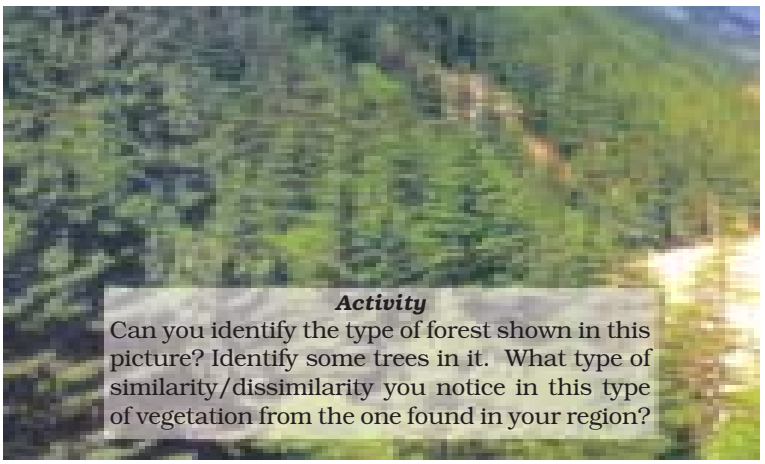
MEDICINAL PLANTS

India is known for its herbs and spices from ancient times. Some 2,000 plants have been described in Ayurveda and atleast 500 are in regular use. The World Conservation Union's Red list has named 352 medicinal plants of which 52 are critically threatened and 49 endangered. The commonly used plants in India are:

Sarpagandha : Used to treat blood pressure; it is found only in India.
Jamun : The juice from ripe fruit is used to prepare vinegar which is carminative and diuretic, and has digestive properties. The powder of the seed is used for controlling diabetes.
Arjun : The fresh juice of leaves is a cure for earache. It is also used to regulate blood pressure.
Babool : Leaves are used as a cure for eye sores. Its gum is used as a tonic.
Neem : Has high antibiotic and antibacterial properties.
Tulsi Plant : Is used to cure cough and cold.
Kachnar : Is used to cure asthma and ulcers. The buds and roots are good for digestive problems.

Identify more medicinal plants in your area. Which plants are used as medicines by local people to cure some diseases?

Source : Medicinal Plants by Dr. S.K. Jain, 5th edition 1994, National Book Trust of Inida



Activity
Can you identify the type of forest shown in this picture? Identify some trees in it. What type of similarity/dissimilarity you notice in this type of vegetation from the one found in your region?

Wild Life

Like its flora, India is also rich in its fauna. It has more than 89,000 of animal species. The country has more than 1200 species of birds. They constitute 13% of the world's total. There are 2500 species of fish, which account for nearly 12% of the world's stock. It also shares between 5 and 8 per cent of the world's amphibians, reptiles and mammals.

The elephants are the most majestic animals among the mammals. They are found in the hot wet forests of Assam, Karnataka and Kerala. One-horned rhinoceroses are the other animals, which live in swampy and marshy lands of Assam and West Bengal. Arid areas of the Rann of Kachchh and the Thar Desert are the habitat for wild ass and camels respectively. Indian bison, *nilgai* (blue bull), *chousingha* (four horned antelope), gazel and different species of deer are some other animals found in India. It also has several species of monkeys.

Do You Know? Wildlife Protection Act, was implemented in 1972 in India.

India is the only country in the world that has both tigers and lions. The natural habitat of the Indian lion is the Gir forest in Gujarat. Tigers are found in the forests of Madhya Pradesh, the Sundarbans of West Bengal and the Himalayan region. Leopards too are members of the cat family. They are important among animals of prey.

Do you know
The Gir Forest is the last remaining habitat of the Asiatic lion.

The Himalayas harbour a hardy range of animals, which survive in extreme cold. Ladhak's freezing high altitudes are a home to yak, the shaggy horned wild ox weighing around one tonne, the Tibetan antelope, the bharal (blue sheep), wild sheep, and the *kiang* (Tibetan wild ass). Furhtermore, the ibex, bear, snow-leopard and very rare red panda are found in certain pockets.

In the rivers, lakes and coastal areas, turtles, crocodiles and gharials are found. The

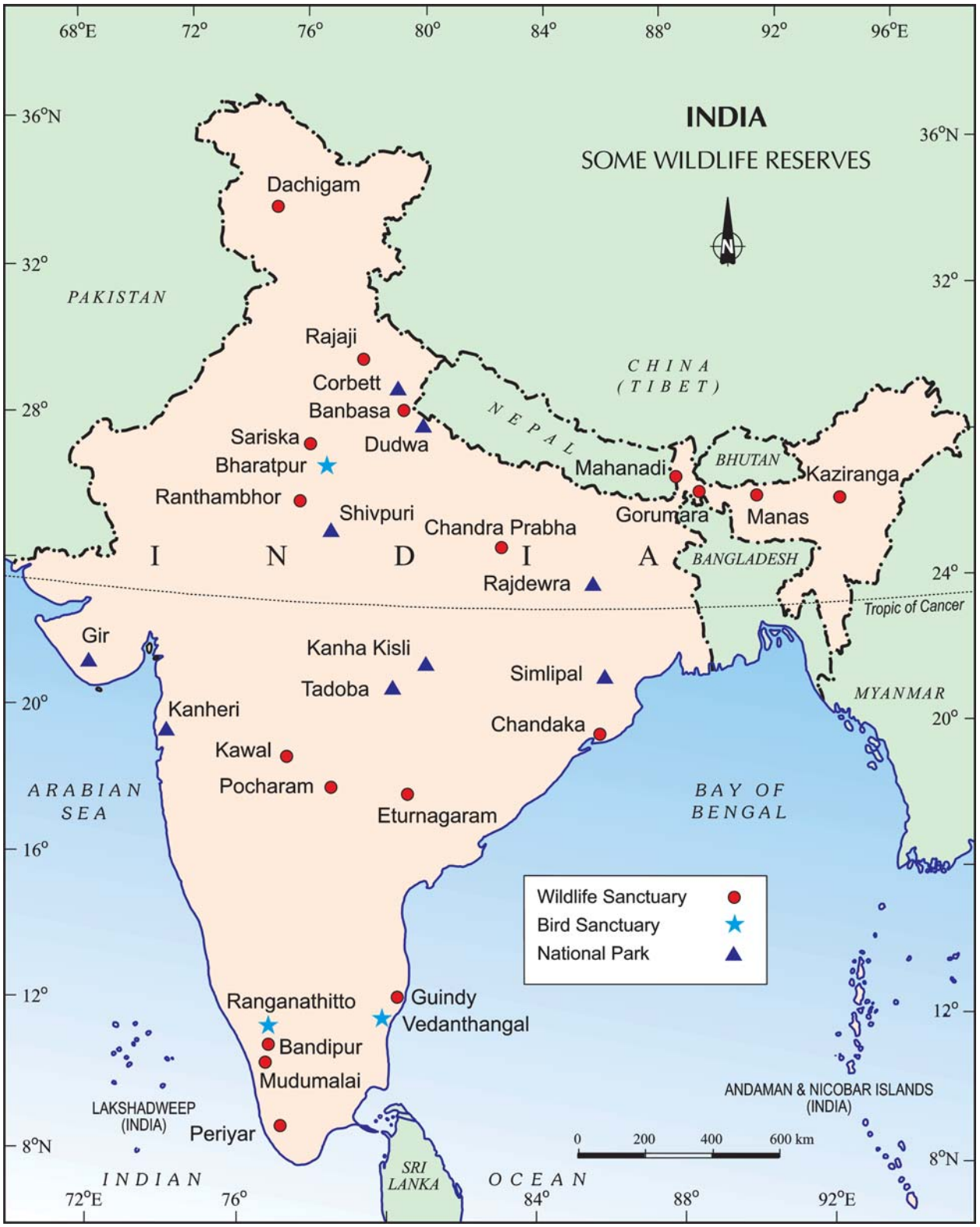


Figure 5.8 : Wildlife Reserves

latter is the only representative of a variety of crocodile, found in the world today.

Bird life in India is colourful. Peacocks, peasants, ducks, parakeets, cranes and pigeons are some of the birds inhabiting the forests and wetlands of the country.

We have selected our crops from a bio-diverse environment i.e. from the reserve of edible plants. We also experimented and selected many medicinal plants. The animals were selected from large stock provided by nature as milch animal. They also provided us draught power, transportation, meat, eggs. The fish provide nutritive food. Many insects help in pollination of crops and fruit trees and exert biological control on such insects, which are harmful. Every species has a role to play in the ecosystem. Hence, conservation is essential. As has been mentioned earlier due to excessive exploitation of the plants and animal resources by human beings, the ecosystem has been disturbed. About 1,300 plant species are endangered and 20 species are extinct. Quite a few animal species are also endangered and some have become extinct.

The main causes for this major threat to nature are hunting by greedy hunters for commercial purposes. Pollution due to chemical and industrial waste, acid deposits, introduction of alien species and reckless cutting of the forests to bring land under cultivation and inhabitation, are also responsible for the imbalance.

To protect the flora and fauna of the county, the government has taken many steps.

(i) Fourteen biosphere reserves have been set up in the country to protect flora and fauna. Four out of these, the Sunderbans in the West Bengal, Nanda Devi in Uttaranchal, the Gulf of Mannar in Tamil Nadu and the Nilgiris (Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu) have been included in the world network of Biosphese reserves.

Govt on save-vulture task

CHETAN Chauhan
New Delhi, January 30

All not lost: Tigers alive in Kuno

Tigers for Sariska

Gujarat habitat turns gull graveyard

Plumed recap

Nod to tiger protection body

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, December 16

Tigers dying, census confirms

CBI to probe Ranthambore tiger deaths

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, January 5

Rhino killed for horn

Activity

(i) Find out from the above newspaper cuttings, the main concern highlighted in the given news items.
(ii) Collect more information about various endangered species from newspapers and magazines.
(iii) Find out various steps taken by the Indian government to protect them.
(iv) Discribe how you can contribute to the protection of endangered animals and birds?

Migratory Birds

Some of the wetlands of India are popular with migratory birds. During winter, birds, such as *Siberian Crane come in large numbers. One such place favourable with birds is the Rann of Kachchh. At a place where the desert merges with the sea, flamingo with their brilliant, pink plumage, come in thousands to build nest mounds from the salty mud and raise their young ones. It is one among many extraordinary sights in the country. Is it not a rich natural heritage of ours?*

Fourteen Bio-reserves

• Sunderbans	• Simlipal
• Gulf of Mannar	• Dihang-Dibang
• The Nilgiris	• Dibru Saikhowa
• Nanda Devi	• Agasthyamalai
• Nokrek	• Kanchenjunga
• Great Nicobar	• Pachmari
• Manas	• Achanakmar-Amarkantak

(ii) Financial and technical assistance is provided to many Botanical Gardens by the government since 1992.

(iii) Project Tiger, Project Rhino, Project Great Indian Bustard and many other eco-developmental projects have been introduced.

(iv) 89 National Parks, 49 Wildlife sanctuaries and Zoological gardens are set up to take care of Natural heritage.

All of us must realise the importance of the natural ecosystem for our own survival. It is possible if indiscriminate destruction of natural environment is put to an immediate end.

EXERCISE

1. Choose the right answer from the four alternatives given below:

(i) To which one of the following types of vegetation does rubber belong to?

(a) Tundra (c) Himalayan

(b) Tidal (d) Tropical Evergreen

(ii) Cinchona trees are found in the areas of rainfall more than

(a) 100 cm (c) 70 cm

(b) 50 cm (d) less than 50 cm

(iii) In which of the following state is the Simlipal bio-reserve located?

(a) Punjab (b) Delhi

(c) Orissa (d) West Bengal

(iv) Which one of the following bio-reserves of India is not included in the world network of bioreserve?

(a) Manas (c) Gulf of Mannar

(b) Dihang-Dibang (d) Nanda devi

2. Answer the following questions briefly.
   (i) Define an ecosystem.
   (ii) What factors are responsible for the distribution of plants and animals in India?
   (iii) What is a bio-reserve? Give two examples.
   (iv) Name two animals having habitat in tropical and montane type of vegetation.
3. Distinguish between
   (i) Flora and Fauna
   (ii) Tropical Evergreen and Deciduous forests
4. Name different types of Vegetation found in India and describe the vegetation of high altitudes.
5. Quite a few species of plants and animals are endangered in India. Why?
6. Why has India a rich heritage of flora and fauna?

Map Skills

On an outline map of India, label the following.
(i) Areas of Evergreen Forests
(ii) Areas of Dry Deciduous Forests
(iii) Two national parks each in Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western parts of the Country

Project/Activity

(i) Find some trees in your neighbourhood having medicinal values.
(ii) Find ten occupations getting raw material from forests and wild life.
(iii) Write a poem or paragraph showing the importance of wild life.
(iv) Write the script of a street play giving the importance of tree plantation and try to enact it in your locality.
(v) Plant a tree either on your birthday or one of your family member's birthday. Note the growth of the tree and notice in which season it grows faster.

2 FOREST AND WILDLIFE RESOURCES

Narak! My Lord, you are the creator of music in the world of Lepchas

Oh Narak! My Lord, let me dedicate myself to you

Let me gather your music from the springs, the rivers, the mountains, the forests, the insects and the animals

Let me gather your music from the sweet breeze and offer it to you

Source: *Lepcha folk song from northern part of West Bengal*

We share this planet with millions of other living beings, starting from micro-organisms and bacteria, lichens to banyan trees, elephants and blue whales. This entire habitat that we live in has immense biodiversity. We humans along with all living organisms form a complex web of ecological system in which we are only a part and very much dependent on this system for our own existence. For example, the plants, animals and micro-organisms re-create the quality of the air we breathe, the water we drink and the soil that produces our food without which we cannot survive. Forests play a key role in the ecological system as these are also the primary producers on which all other living beings depend.

Biodiversity or Biological Diversity is immensely rich in wildlife and cultivated species, diverse in form and function but closely integrated in a system through multiple network of interdependencies.

Flora and Fauna in India

If you look around, you will be able to find that there are some animals and plants which are unique in your area. In fact, India is one of the world's richest countries in terms of its vast array of biological diversity, and has nearly 8 per cent of the total number of species in the world (estimated to be 1.6 million). This is possibly twice or thrice the number yet to be discovered. You have already studied in detail about the extent and variety of forest and wildlife resources in India. You may have realised the importance of these resources in our daily life. These diverse flora and fauna are so well integrated in our daily life that we take these for granted. But, lately, they are under great stress mainy due to insensitivity to our environment.

Do you know?

Over 81,000 species of fauna and 47,000 species of flora are found in this country so far? Of the estimated 47,000 plant species, about 15,000 flowering species are endemic (indigenous) to India.

Activity

Find out stories prevalent in your region which are about the harmonious relationship between human beings and nature.

Some estimates suggest that at least 10 per cent of India's recorded wild flora and 20 per cent of its mammals are on the threatened list. Many of these would now be categorised as 'critical', that is on the verge of extinction like the cheetah, pink-headed duck, mountain quail, forest spotted owlet, and plants like *madhuca insignis* (a wild

variety of mahua) and *hubbardia heptaneuron*,(a species of grass). In fact, no one can say how many species may have already been lost. Today, we only talk of the larger and more visible animals and plants that have become extinct but what about smaller animals like insects and plants?

Do you know?

Do you know that among the larger animals in India, 79 species of mammals, 44 of birds, 15 of reptiles, and 3 of amphibians are threatened? Nearly 1,500 plant species are considered endangered. Flowering plants and vertebrate animals have recently become extinct at a rate estimated to be 50 to 100 times the average expected natural rate.

Vanishing Forests

The dimensions of deforestation in India are staggering. The forest cover in the country is estimated at 637,293 sq km, which is 19.39 per cent of the total geographical area. (dense forest 11.48 per cent; open forest 7.76 per cent; and mangrove 0.15 per cent). According to the State of Forest Report (1999), the dense forest cover has increased

Fig. 2.1

by 10,098 sq km since 1997. However, this apparent increase in the forest cover is due to plantation by different agencies. The State of Forest Report does not differentiate between natural forests and plantations. Therefore, these reports fail to deliver accurate information about actual loss of natural forests.

Let us now understand the different categories of existing plants and animal species. Based on the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), we can classify as follows –

Normal Species: Species whose population levels are considered to be normal for their survival, such as cattle, sal, pine, rodents, etc.

Endangered Species: These are species which are in danger of extinction. The survival of such species is difficult if the negative factors that have led to a decline in their population continue to operate. The examples of such species are black buck, crocodile, Indian wild ass, Indian rhino, lion tailed macaque, sangai (brow anter deer in Manipur), etc.

Vulnerable Species: These are species whose population has declined to levels from where it is likely to move into the endangered category in the near future if the negative factors continue to operate. The examples of such species are blue sheep, Asiatic elephant, Gangetic dolphin, etc.

Rare Species: Species with small population may move into the endangered or vulnerable category if the negative factors affecting them continue to operate. The examples of such species are the Himalayan brown bear, wild Asiatic buffalo, desert fox and hornbill, etc.

Endemic Species: These are species which are only found in some particular areas usually isolated by natural or geographical barriers. Examples of such species are the Andaman teal, Nicobar pigeon, Andaman wild pig, mithun in Arunchal Pradesh.

Extinct Species: These are species which are not found after searches of known or likely areas where they may occur. A species may be extinct from a local area, region, country, continent or the entire earth. Examples of such species are the Asiatic cheetah, pink head duck.

Fig. 2.2: A few extinct, rare and endangered species

Asiatic Cheetah: where did they go?

The world's fastest land mammal, the cheetah (Acinonyx jubantus), is a unique and specialised member of the cat family and can move at the speed of 112 km./hr. The cheetah is often mistaken for a leopard. Its distinguishing marks are the long teardrop-shaped lines on each side of the nose from the corner of its eyes to its mouth. Prior to the 20th century, cheetahs were widely distributed throughout Africa and Asia. Today, the Asian cheetah is nearly extinct due to a decline of available habitat and prey. The species was declared extinct in India long back in 1952.

What are the negative factors that cause such fearful depletion of the flora and fauna?

If you look around, you will be able to find out how we have transformed nature into a resource obtaining directly and indirectly from the forests and wildlife – wood, barks, leaves, rubber, medicines, dyes, food, fuel, fodder, manure, etc. So it is we ourselves who have depleted our forests and wildlife. The greatest damage inflicted on Indian forests was during the colonial period due to the expansion of the railways, agriculture, commercial and scientific forestry and mining activities. Even after Independence, agricultural expansion continues to be one of the major causes of depletion of forest resources. Between 1951 and 1980, according to the Forest Survey of India, over 26,200 sq. km. of forest area was converted into agricultural land all over India. Substantial parts of the tribal belts, especially in the north-eastern and central India, have been deforested or degraded by shifting cultivation (jhum), a type of 'slash and burn' agriculture.

Are colonial forest policies to be blamed?

Some of our environmental activists say that the promotion of a few favoured species, in many parts of India, has been carried through the ironically-termed "enrichment plantation", in which a single commercially valuable species was extensively planted and other species eliminated. For instance,

teak monoculture has damaged the natural forest in South India and Chir Pine (*Pinus roxburghii)* plantations in the Himalayas have replaced the Himalayan oak (*Quercius* spp.) and *Rhododendron* forests.

Large-scale development projects have also contributed significantly to the loss of forests. Since 1951, over 5,000 sq km of forest was cleared for river valley projects. Clearing of forests is still continuing with projects like the Narmada Sagar Project in Madhya Pradesh, which would inundate 40,000 hectares of forest. Mining is another important factor behind deforestation. The Buxa Tiger Reserve in West Bengal is seriously threatened by the ongoing dolomite mining. It has disturbed the natural habitat of many species and blocked the migration route of several others, including the great Indian elephant.

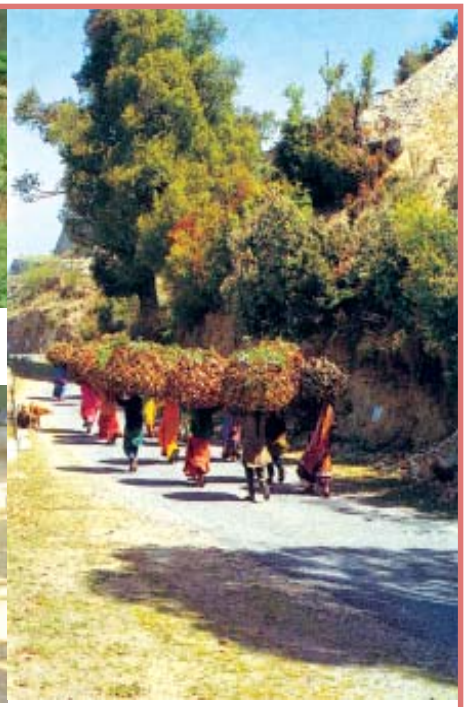
Many foresters and environmentalists hold the view that the greatest degrading factors behind the depletion of forest resources are grazing and fuel-wood collection. Though, there may be some substance in their argument, yet, the fact remains that a substantial part of the fuel-fodder demand is met by lopping rather than by felling entire trees. The forest ecosystems are repositories of some of the country's most valuable forest products, minerals and other resources that meet the demands of the rapidly expanding industrial-urban economy. These protected areas, thus mean different things to different people, and therein lies the fertile ground for conflicts.

The Himalayan Yew in trouble

The Himalayan Yew (*Taxus wallachiana*) is a medicinal plant found in various parts of Himachal Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh. A chemical compound called 'taxol' is extracted from the bark, needles, twigs and roots of this tree, and it has been successfully used to treat some cancers – the drug is now the biggest selling anti-cancer drug in the world. The species is under great threat due to over-exploitation. In the last one decade, thousands of yew trees have dried up in various parts of Himachal Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh.

Tribal girls using bamboo saplings in a nursery at Mukhali near Slient Valley

Tribal women selling minor forest produce



Leaf litter collection by women folk

Fig. 2.3

Habitat destruction, hunting, poaching, over-exploitation, environmental pollution, poisoning and forest fires are factors, which have led to the decline in India's biodiversity. Other important causes of environmental destruction are unequal access, inequitable consumption of resources and differential sharing of responsibility for environmental well-being. Over-population in third world countries is often cited as the cause of environmental degradation. However, an average American consumes 40 times more resources than an average Somalian. Similarly, the richest five per cent of Indian society probably cause more ecological damage because of the amount they consume than the poorest 25 per cent. The former shares minimum responsibilities for environmental well-being. The question is: who is consuming what, from where and how much?

Do you know?

Do you know that over half of India's natural forests are gone, one-third of its wetlands drained out, 70 per cent of its surface water bodies polluted, 40 per cent of its mangroves wiped out, and with continued hunting and trade of wild animals and commercially valuable plants, thousands of plant and animal species are heading towards extinction?

Activity

Have you noticed any activity which leads to the loss of biodiversity around you? Write a note on it and suggest some measures to prevent it.

The destruction of forests and wildlife is not just a biological issue. The biological loss is strongly correlated with the loss of cultural diversity. Such losses have increasingly marginalised and impoverished many indigenous and other forest-dependent communities, who directly depend on various components of the forest and wildlife for food, drink, medicine, culture, spirituality, etc. Within the poor, women are affected more than men. In many societies, women bear the major responsibility of collection of fuel, fodder, water and other basic subsistence needs. As these resources are depleted, the drudgery of women increases and sometimes they have to walk for more than 10 km to collect these resources. This causes serious health problems for women and negligence of home and children because of the increased hours of work, which often has serious social implications. The indirect impact of degradation such as severe drought or deforestation-induced floods, etc. also hits the poor the hardest. Poverty in these cases is a direct outcome of environmental destruction. Therefore, forest and wildlife, are vital to the quality of life and environment in the subcontinent. It is imperative to adapt to sound forest and wildlife conservation strategies.

Conservation of Forest and Wildlife in India

Conservation in the background of rapid decline in wildlife population and forestry has become essential. But why do we need to conserve our forests and wildlife? Conservation preserves the ecological diversity and our life support systems – water, air and soil. It also preserves the genetic diversity of plants and animals for better growth of species and breeding. For example, in agriculture, we are still dependent on traditional crop varieties. Fisheries too are heavily dependent on the maintenance of aquatic biodiversity.

In the 1960s and 1970s, conservationists demanded a national wildlife protection programme. The Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act was implemented in 1972, with various provisions for protecting habitats. An all-India list of protected species was also published. The thrust of the programme was towards protecting the remaining population of certain endangered species by banning hunting, giving legal protection to their habitats, and restricting trade in wildlife. Subsequently, central and many state governments established national parks and wildlife sanctuaries about which you have already studied. The central government also announced several projects for protecting specific animals, which were gravely threatened, including the tiger, the one-

Fig. 2.4: Rhino and deer in Kaziranga National Park

horned rhinoceros, the Kashmir stag or *hangul*, three types of crocodiles – fresh water crocodile, saltwater crocodile and the *Gharial*, the Asiatic lion, and others. Most recently, the Indian elephant, black buck (chinkara), the great Indian bustard (*godawan*) and the snow leopard, etc. have been given full or partial legal protection against hunting and trade throughout India.

Project Tiger

Tiger is one of the key wildlife species in the faunal web. In 1973, the authorities realised that the tiger population had dwindled to 1,827 from an estimated 55,000 at the turn of the century. The major threats to tiger population are numerous, such as poaching for trade, shrinking habitat, depletion of prey base species, growing human population, etc. The trade of tiger skins and the use of their bones in traditional medicines, especially in the Asian countries left the tiger population on the verge of extinction. Since India and Nepal provide habitat to about two-thirds of the surviving tiger population in the world, these two nations became prime targets for poaching and illegal trading.

"Project Tiger", one of the well-publicised wildlife campaigns in the world, was launched in 1973. Initially, it showed success as the tiger population went up to 4,002 in 1985 and 4,334 in 1989. But in 1993, the population of the tiger had dropped to 3,600. There are 27 tiger reserves in India covering an area of 37,761 sq km Tiger conservation has been viewed not only as an effort to save an endangered species, but with equal importance as a means of preserving biotypes of sizeable magnitude. Corbett National Park in Uttaranchal, Sunderbans National Park in West Bengal, Bandhavgarh National Park in Madhya Pradesh, Sariska Wildlife Sanctuary in Rajasthan, Manas Tiger Reserve in Assam and Periyar Tiger Reserve in Kerala are some of the tiger reserves of India.

The conservation projects are now focusing on biodiversity rather than on a few of its components. There is now a more intensive search for different conservation measures. Increasingly, even insects are beginning to find a place in conservation planning. In the notification under Wildlife Act of 1980 and 1986, several hundred butterflies, moths, beetles, and one dragonfly have been added to the list of protected species. In 1991, for the first time plants were also added to the list, starting with six species.

Activity

Collect more information on the wildlife sanctuaries and national parks of India and cite their locations on the map of India.

Gharial on the brink

The gharial population has been at its lowest since the 1970s. What went wrong and what can we do?

ROMULUS WHITAKER and JANAKI LENIN

Bird deaths blamed on dirty Yamuna

Delhi Govt Report Points To Toxic Elements in Stagnant Water

CRITICALLY ENDANGERED: *Captive gharial at the Madras*

Can you find out the reasons for the above mentioned problems?

Types and Distribution of Forest and Wildlife Resources

Even if we want to conserve our vast forest and wildlife resources, it is rather difficult to manage, control and regulate them. In India, much of its forest and wildlife resources are either owned or managed by the government through the Forest Department or other government departments. These are classified under the following categories.

(i) ***Reserved Forests:*** More than half of the total forest land has been declared **reserved forests**. Reserved forests are regarded as the most valuable as far as the conservation of forest and wildlife resources are concerned.

(ii) ***Protected Forests:*** Almost one-third of the total forest area is protected forest, as declared by the Forest Department. This forest land are protected from any further depletion.

(iii) ***Unclassed Forests:*** These are other forests and wastelands belonging to both government and private individuals and communities.

Reserved and protected forests are also referred to as permanent forest estates maintained for the purpose of producing timber and other forest produce, and for protective reasons. Madhya Pradesh has the largest area under permanent forests, constituting 75 per cent of its total forest area. Jammu and Kashmir, Andhra Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and Maharashtra have large percentages of reserved forests of its total forest area whereas Bihar, Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan have a bulk of it under protected forests. All North-eastern states and parts of Gujarat have a very high percentage of their forests as un-classed forests managed by local communities.

Community and Conservation

Conservation strategies are not new in our country. We often ignore that in India, forests are also home to some of the traditional communities. In some areas of India, local communities are struggling to conserve these habitats along with government officials, recognising that only this will secure their own long-term livelihood. In Sariska Tiger Reserve, Rajasthan, villagers have fought against mining by citing the Wildlife Protection Act. In many areas, villagers themselves are protecting habitats and explicitly rejecting government involvement. The inhabitants of five villages in the Alwar district of Rajasthan have declared 1,200 hectares of forest as the Bhairodev Dakav 'Sonchuri', declaring their own set of rules and regulations which do not allow hunting, and are protecting the wildlife against any outside encroachments.

Sacred groves - a wealth of diverse and rare species

Nature worship is an age old tribal belief based on the premise that all creations of nature have to be protected. Such beliefs have preserved several virgin forests in pristine form called Sacred Groves (the forests of God and Goddesses). These patches of forest or parts of large forests have been left untouched by the local people and any interference with them is banned.

Certain societies revere a particular tree which they have preserved from time immemorial. The Mundas and the Santhal of Chhota Nagpur region worship mahua (**Bassia latifolia**) and kadamba (**Anthocaphalus cadamba**) trees, and the tribals of Orissa and Bihar worship the tamarind (**Tamarindus indica**) and mango (**Mangifera indica**) trees during weddings. To many of us, peepal and banyan trees are considered sacred.

Indian society comprises several cultures, each with its own set of traditional methods of conserving nature and its creations. Sacred qualities are often ascribed to springs, mountain peaks, plants and animals which are closely protected. You will find troops of macaques and langurs around many temples. They are fed daily and treated as a part of temple devotees. In and around Bishnoi villages in Rajasthan, herds of blackbuck, (chinkara), nilgai and peacocks can be seen as an integral part of the community and nobody harms them.

Activity

Write a short essay on any practices which you may have observed and practised in your everyday lives that conserve and protect the environment around you.

The famous **Chipko** movement in the Himalayas has not only successfully resisted deforestation in several areas but has also shown that community afforestation with indigenous species can be enormously successful. Attempts to revive the traditional conservation methods or developing new methods of ecological farming are now widespread. Farmers and citizen's groups like the **Beej Bachao Andolan** in Tehri and **Navdanya** have shown that adequate levels of diversified crop production without the use of synthetic chemicals are possible and economically viable.

In India joint forest management (JFM) programme furnishes a good example for involving local communities in the management and restoration of degraded forests. The programme has been in formal existence since 1988 when the state of Orissa passed the first resolution for joint forest management. JFM depends on the formation of local (village) institutions that undertake protection activities mostly on degraded forest land managed by the forest department. In return, the members of these communities are entitled to intermediary benefits like non-timber forest produces and share in the timber harvested by 'successful protection'.

The clear lesson from the dynamics of both environmental destruction and reconstruction in India is that local communities everywhere have to be involved in some kind of natural resource management. But there is still a long way to go before local communities are at the centre-stage in decision-making. Accept only those economic or developmental activities, that are people centric, environment-friendly and economically rewarding.

"The tree is a peculiar organism of unlimited kindness and benevolence and makes no demand for its sustenance, and extends generously the products of its life activity. It affords protection to all beings, offering shade even to the axemen who destroy it".

Gautama Buddha (487 B.C.)

Exercises Exercises **Exercises** Exercises Exercises

1. Multiple choice questions.

(i) Which of these statements is not a valid reason for the depletion of flora and fauna?

(a) Agricultural expansion.
(b) Large scale developmental projects.
(c) Grazing and fuel wood collection.
(d) Rapid industrialisation and urbanisation.

(ii) Which of the following conservation strategies do not directly involve community participation?

(a) Joint forest management
(b) Beej Bachao Andolan
(c) Chipko Movement
(d) Demarcation of Wildlife sanctuaries

2. Match the following animals with their category of existence.

Animals/Plants	Category of existence
Black buck	Extinct
Asiatic elephant	Rare
Andaman wild pig	Endangered
Himalayan brown bear	Vulnerable
Pink head duck	Endemic

3. Match the following.

Reserved forests	other forests and wastelands belonging to both government and private individuals and communities
Protected forests	forests are regarded as most valuable as far as the conservation of forest and wildlife resources
Unclassed forests	forest lands are protected from any further depletion

4. Answer the following questions in about 30 words.

(i) What is biodiversity? Why is biodiversity important for human lives?
(ii) How have human activities affected the depletion of flora and fauna? Explain.

5. Answer the following questions in about 120 words.

(i) Describe how communities have conserved and protected forests and wildlife in India?
(ii) Write a note on good practices towards conserving forest and wildlife.

UNIT III

CLIMATE, VEGETATION AND SOIL

This unit deals with

- *Weather and climate – spatial and temporal distribution of temperature, pressure, winds and rainfall; Indian monsoons: mechanism, onset and variability – spatial and temporal; climatic types*
- *Natural vegetation – forest types and distribution; wild life conservation; biosphere reserves*
- *Soils – major types and their distribution, soil degradation and conservation*

CHAPTER

4

CLIMATE

We drink more water during summers. Your uniform during the summer is different from the winters. Why do you wear lighter clothes during summers and heavy woollen clothes during winters in north India? In southern India, woollen clothes are not required. In northeastern states, winters are mild except in the hills. There are variations in weather conditions during different seasons. These changes occur due to the changes in the elements of weather (temperature, pressure, wind direction and velocity, humidity and precipitation, etc.).

> Weather is the momentary state of the atmosphere while climate refers to the average of the weather conditions over a longer period of time. Weather changes quickly, may be within a day or week but climate changes imperceptively and may be noted after 50 years or even more.

You have already studied about the monsoon in your earlier classes. You are also aware of the meaning of the word, "monsoon". Monsoon connotes the climate associated with seasonal reversal in the direction of winds. India has hot monsoonal climate which is the prevalent climate in south and southeast Asia.

UNITY AND DIVERSITY IN THE MONSOON CLIMATE

The monsoon regime emphasises the unity of India with the rest of southeast Asian region. This view of broad unity of the monsoon type of climate should not, however, lead one to ignore its regional variations which differentiate the weather and climate of different regions of India. For example, the climate of Kerala and Tamil Nadu in the south are so different from that of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in the north, and yet all of these have a monsoon type of climate. The climate of India has many regional variations expressed in the pattern of winds, temperature and rainfall, rhythm of seasons and the degree of wetness or dryness. These regional diversities may be described as sub-types of monsoon climate. Let us take a closer look at these regional variations in temperature, winds and rainfall.

While in the summer the mercury occasionally touches 55°C in the western Rajasthan, it drops down to as low as minus 45°C in winter around Leh. Churu in Rajasthan may record a temperature of 50°C or more on a June day while the mercury hardly touches 19°C in Tawang (Arunachal Pradesh) on the same day. On a December night, temperature in Drass (Jammu and Kashmir) may drop down to minus 45°C while Tiruvanantapuram or Chennai on the same night records 20°C or 22°C. These examples confirm that there are seasonal variations in temperature from place to place and from region to region in India. Not only this, if we take only a single place and record the temperature for just one day, variations are no less striking. In Kerala and in the Andaman Islands, the difference between day and night temperatures may be hardly seven or eight degree Celsius. But in the Thar desert, if the day temperature is around 50°C, at night, it may drop down considerably upto 15°-20°C.

Now, let us see the regional variations in precipitation. While snowfall occurs in the Himalayas, it only rains over the rest of the country. Similarly, variations are noticeable not only in the type of precipitation but also in its amount. While Cherrapunji and Mawsynram in the Khasi Hills of Meghalaya receive rainfall over 1,080 cm in a year, Jaisalmer in Rajasthan rarely gets more than 9 cm of rainfall during the same period.

Tura situated in the Garo Hills of Meghalaya may receive an amount of rainfall in a single day which is equal to 10 years of rainfall at Jaisalmer. While the annual precipitation is less than 10 cm in the north-west Himalayas and the western deserts, it exceeds 400 cm in Meghalaya.

The Ganga delta and the coastal plains of Orissa are hit by strong rain-bearing storms almost every third or fifth day in July and August while the Coromandal coast, a thousand km to the south, goes generally dry during these months. Most parts of the country get rainfall during June-September, but on the coastal areas of Tamil Nadu, it rains in the beginning of the winter season.

In spite of these differences and variations, the climate of India is monsoonal in rhythm and character.

Factors Determining the Climate of India

India's climate is controlled by a number of factors which can be broadly divided into two groups — factors related to location and relief, and factors related to air pressure and winds.

Factors related to Location and Relief

Latitude : You already know the latitudinal and longitudinal extent of the land of India. You also know that the Tropic of Cancer passes through the central part of India in east-west direction. Thus, northern part of the India lies in sub-tropical and temperate zone and the part lying south of the Tropic of Cancer falls in the tropical zone. The tropical zone being nearer to the equator, experiences high temperatures throughout the year with small daily and annual range. Area north of the Tropic of Cancer being away from the equator, experiences extreme climate with high daily and annual range of temperature.

The Himalayan Mountains : The lofty Himalayas in the north along with its extensions act as an effective climatic divide. The towering mountain chain provides an invincible shield to protect the subcontinent from the cold northern winds. These cold and chilly winds originate near the Arctic circle and blow across central and eastern Asia. The Himalayas also trap the monsoon winds, forcing them to shed their moisture within the subcontinent.

Distribution of Land and Water : India is flanked by the Indian Ocean on three sides in the south and girdled by a high and continuous mountain-wall in the north. As compared to the landmass, water heats up or cools down slowly. This differential heating of land and sea creates different air pressure zones in different seasons in and around the Indian subcontinent. Difference in air pressure causes reversal in the direction of monsoon winds.

Distance from the Sea : With a long coastline, large coastal areas have an equable climate. Areas in the interior of India are far away from the moderating influence of the sea. Such areas have extremes of climate. That is why, the people of Mumbai and the Konkan coast have hardly any idea of extremes of temperature and the seasonal rhythm of weather. On the other hand, the seasonal contrasts in weather at places in the interior of the country such as Delhi, Kanpur and Amritsar affect the entire sphere of life.

Altitude : Temperature decreases with height. Due to thin air, places in the mountains are cooler than places on the plains. For example, Agra and Darjiling are located on the same latitude, but temperature of January in Agra is 16°C whereas it is only 4°C in Darjiling.

Relief : The physiography or relief of India also affects the temperature, air pressure, direction and speed of wind and the amount and distribution of rainfall. The windward sides of Western Ghats and Assam receive high rainfall

during June-September whereas the southern plateau remains dry due to its leeward situation along the Western Ghats.

Factors Related to Air Pressure and Wind

To understand the differences in local climates of India, we need to understand the mechanism of the following three factors:

(i) Distribution of air pressure and winds on the surface of the earth.
(ii) Upper air circulation caused by factors controlling global weather and the inflow of different air masses and jet streams.
(iii) Inflow of western cyclones generally known as disturbances during the winter season and tropical depressions during the south-west monsoon period into India, creating weather conditions favourable to rainfall.

The mechanism of these three factors can be understood with reference to winter and summer seasons of the year separately.

Mechanism of Weather in the Winter Season

Surface Pressure and Winds : In winter months, the weather conditions over India are generally influenced by the distribution of pressure in Central and Western Asia. A high pressure centre in the region lying to the north of the Himalayas develops during winter. This centre of high pressure gives rise to the flow of air at the low level from the north towards the Indian subcontinent, south of the mountain range. The surface winds blowing out of the high pressure centre over Central Asia reach India in the form of a dry continental air mass. These continental winds come in contact with trade winds over northwestern India. The position of this contact zone is not, however, stable. Occasionally, it may shift its position as far east as the middle Ganga valley with the result that the whole of the northwestern and northern India up to the middle Ganga valley comes under the influence of dry northwestern winds.

Jet Stream and Upper Air Circulation : The pattern of air circulation discussed above is witnessed only at the lower level of the atmosphere near the surface of the earth. Higher up in the lower troposphere, about three km above the surface of the earth, a different pattern of air circulation is observed. The variations in the atmospheric pressure closer to the surface of the earth have no role to play in the making of upper air circulation. All of Western and Central Asia remains under the influence of westerly winds along the altitude of 9-13 km from west to east. These winds blow across the Asian continent at latitudes north of the Himalayas roughly parallel to the Tibetan highlands (Figure 4.1). These are known as jet streams. Tibetan highlands act as a barrier in the path of these jet streams. As a result, jet streams get bifurcated. One of its branches blows to the north of the Tibetan highlands, while the southern branch blows in an eastward direction, south of the Himalayas. It has its mean position at 25°N in February at 200-300 mb level. It is believed that this southern branch of the jet stream exercises an important influence on the winter weather in India.

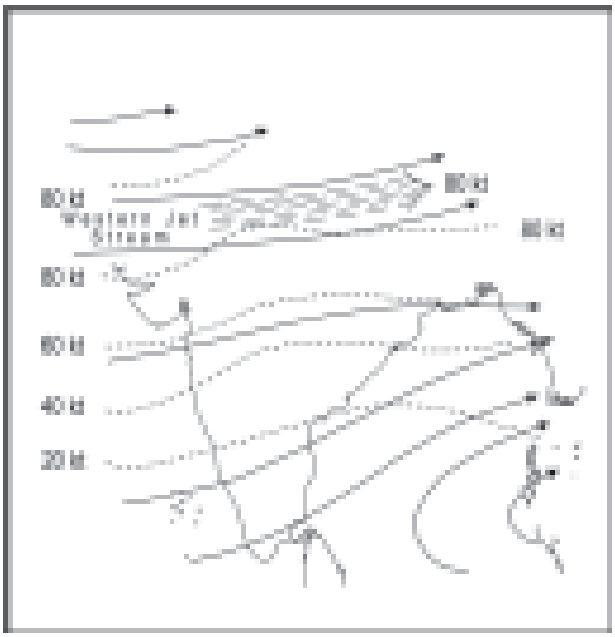


Figure 4.1 : Direction of Winds in India in Winter at the Height of 9-13 km

Western Cyclonic Disturbance and Tropical Cyclones : The western cyclonic disturbances which enter the Indian subcontinent from the west and the northwest during the winter months, originate over the Mediterranean Sea and are

brought into India by the westerly jet stream. An increase in the prevailing night temperature generally indicates an advance in the arrival of these cyclones disturbances.

Tropical cyclones originate over the Bay of Bengal and the Indian ocean. These tropical cyclones have very high wind velocity and heavy rainfall and hit the Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Orissa coast. Most of these cyclones are very destructive due to high wind velocity and torrential rain that accompanies it. Have you seen their movement in the weather report in the television?

Mechanism of Weather in the Summer Season

Surface Pressure and Winds : As the summer sets in and the sun shifts northwards, the wind circulation over the subcontinent undergoes a complete reversal at both, the lower as well as the upper levels. By the middle of July, the low pressure belt nearer the surface [termed as Inter Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ)] shifts northwards, roughly parallel to the Himalayas between 20° N and 25° N. By this time, the westerly jet stream withdraws from the Indian region. In fact, meteorologists have found an interrelationship between the northward shift of the equatorial trough (ITCZ) and the withdrawal of the westerly jet stream from over the North Indian Plain. It is generally believed that there is a cause and effect relationship between the two. The ITCZ being a zone of low pressure, attracts inflow of winds from different directions. The maritime tropical airmass (mT) from the southern hemisphere, after crossing the equator, rushes to the low pressure area in the general southwesterly direction. It is this moist air current which is popularly known as the southwest monsoon.

Jet Streams and Upper Air Circulation : The pattern of pressure and winds as mentioned above is formed only at the level of the troposphere. An easterly jet stream flows over

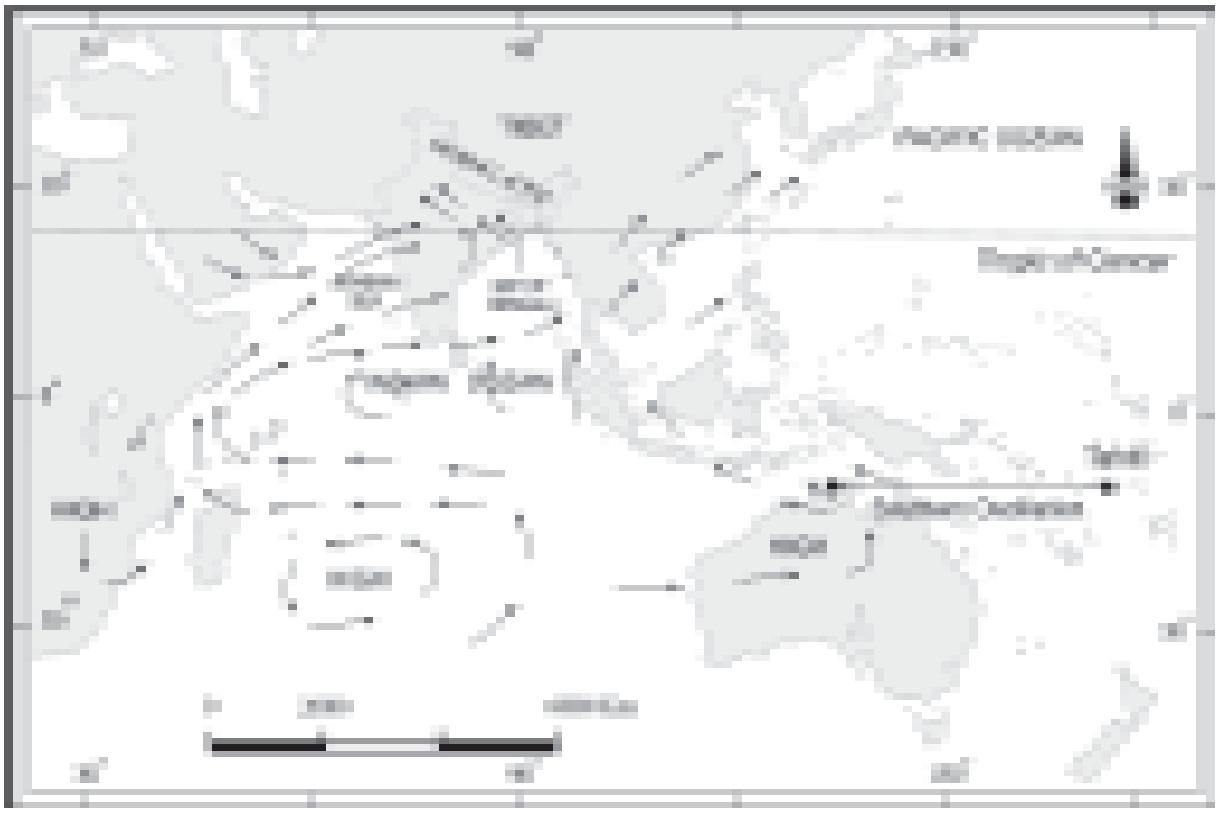


Figure 4.2 : Summer Monsoon Winds : Surface Circulation

Inter Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ)

The Inter Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) is a low pressure zone located at the equator where trade winds converge, and so, it is a zone where air tends to ascend. In July, the ITCZ is located around 20°N-25°N latitudes (over the Gangetic plain), sometimes called the monsoon trough. This monsoon trough encourages the development of thermal low over north and northwest India. Due to the shift of ITCZ, the trade winds of the southern hemisphere cross the equator between 40° and 60°E longitudes and start blowing from southwest to northeast due to the Coriolis force. It becomes southwest monsoon. In winter, the ITCZ moves southward, and so the reversal of winds from northeast to south and southwest, takes place. They are called northeast monsoons.

the southern part of the Peninsula in June, and has a maximum speed of 90 km per hour (Figure 4.3). In August, it is confined to 15°N latitude, and in September up to 22° N latitudes. The easterlies normally do not extend to the north of 30° N latitude in the upper atmosphere.

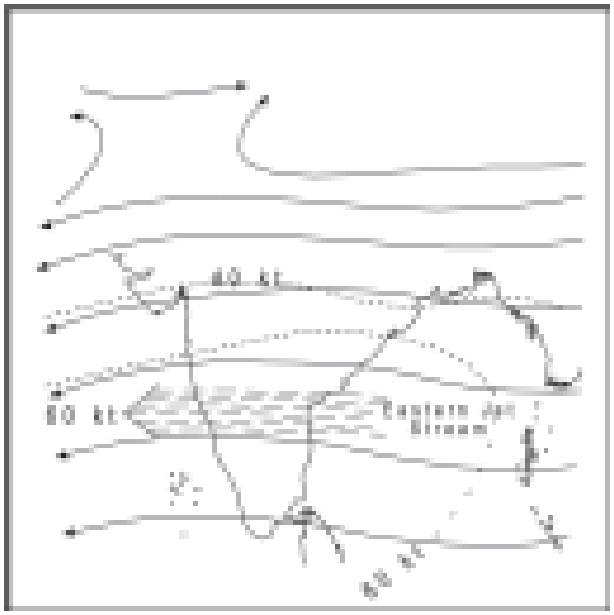


Figure 4.3 : The Direction of Winds at 13 km Altitude in Summer Season

Easterly Jet Stream and Tropical Cyclones : The easterly jet stream steers the tropical depressions into India. These depressions play a significant role in the distribution of monsoon rainfall over the Indian subcontinent. The tracks of these depressions are the areas of highest rainfall in India. The frequency at which these depressions visit India, their direction and intensity, all go a long way in determining the rainfall pattern during the southwest monsoon period.

The Nature of Indian Monsoon

Monsoon is a familiar though a little known climatic phenomenon. Despite the observations spread over centuries, the monsoon continues to puzzle the scientists. Many attempts have been made to discover the exact nature and causation of monsoon, but so far, no single theory has been able to explain the monsoon fully. A real breakthrough has come recently when it was studied at the global rather than at regional level.

Systematic studies of the causes of rainfall in the South Asian region help to understand the causes and salient features of the monsoon, particularly some of its important aspects, such as:

(i) The onset of the monsoon.
(ii) Rain-bearing systems (e.g. tropical cyclones) and the relationship between their frequency and distribution of monsoon rainfall.
(iii) Break in the monsoon.

Onset of the Monsoon

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, it was believed that the differential heating of land and sea during the summer months is the mechanism which sets the stage for the monsoon winds to drift towards the subcontinent. During April and May when the sun shines vertically over the Tropic of Cancer, the large landmass in the north of Indian ocean gets intensely heated. This causes the formation of an intense low pressure in the northwestern part of the subcontinent. Since the pressure in the Indian Ocean in the south of the landmass is high as water gets heated

Figure 4.4 : Onset of Monsoon

slowly, the low pressure cell attracts the southeast trades across the Equator. These conditions help in the northward shift in the position of the ITCZ. The southwest monsoon may thus, be seen as a continuation of the southeast trades deflected towards the Indian subcontinent after crossing the Equator. These winds cross the Equator between 40°E and 60°E longitudes.

The shift in the position of the ITCZ is also related to the phenomenon of the withdrawal of the westerly jet stream from its position over the north Indian plain, south of the Himalayas. The easterly jet stream sets in along 15°N latitude only after the western jet stream has withdrawn itself from the region. This easterly jet stream is held responsible for the burst of the monsoon in India.

Entry of Monsoon into India : The southwest monsoon sets in over the Kerala coast by 1st June and moves swiftly to reach Mumbai and Kolkata between 10th and 13th June. By mid-July, southwest monsoon engulfs the entire subcontinent (Figure 4.5)

Rain-bearing Systems and Rainfall Distribution

There seem to be two rain-bearing systems in India. First originate in the Bay of Bengal causing rainfall over the plains of north India. Second is the Arabian Sea current of the south-west monsoon which brings rain to the west coast of India. Much of the rainfall along the Western Ghats is orographic as the moist air is obstructed and forced to rise along the Ghats. The intensity of rainfall over the west coast of India is, however, related to two factors:

(i) The offshore meteorological conditions.
(ii) The position of the equatorial jet stream along the eastern coast of Africa.

EI-Nino and the Indian Monsoon

EI-Nino is a complex weather system that appears once every three to seven years, bringing drought, floods and other weather extremes to different parts of the world.

The system involves oceanic and atmospheric phenomena with the appearance of warm currents off the coast of Peru in the Eastern Pacific and affects weather in many places including India. EI-Nino is merely an extension of the warm equatorial current which gets replaced temporarily by cold Peruvian current or Humbolt current (locate these currents in your atlas). This current increases the temperature of water on the Peruvian coast by 10°C. This results in:

(i) the distortion of equatorial atmospheric circulation;
(ii) irregularities in the evaporation of sea water;
(iii) reduction in the amount of planktons which further reduces the number of fish in the sea.

The word EI-Nino means 'Child Christ' because this current appears around Christmas in December. December is a summer month in Peru (Southern Hemisphere).

EI-Nino is used in India for forecasting long range monsoon rainfall. In 1990-91, there was a wild EI-Nino event and the onset of southwest monsoon was delayed over most parts of the country ranging from five to twelve days.

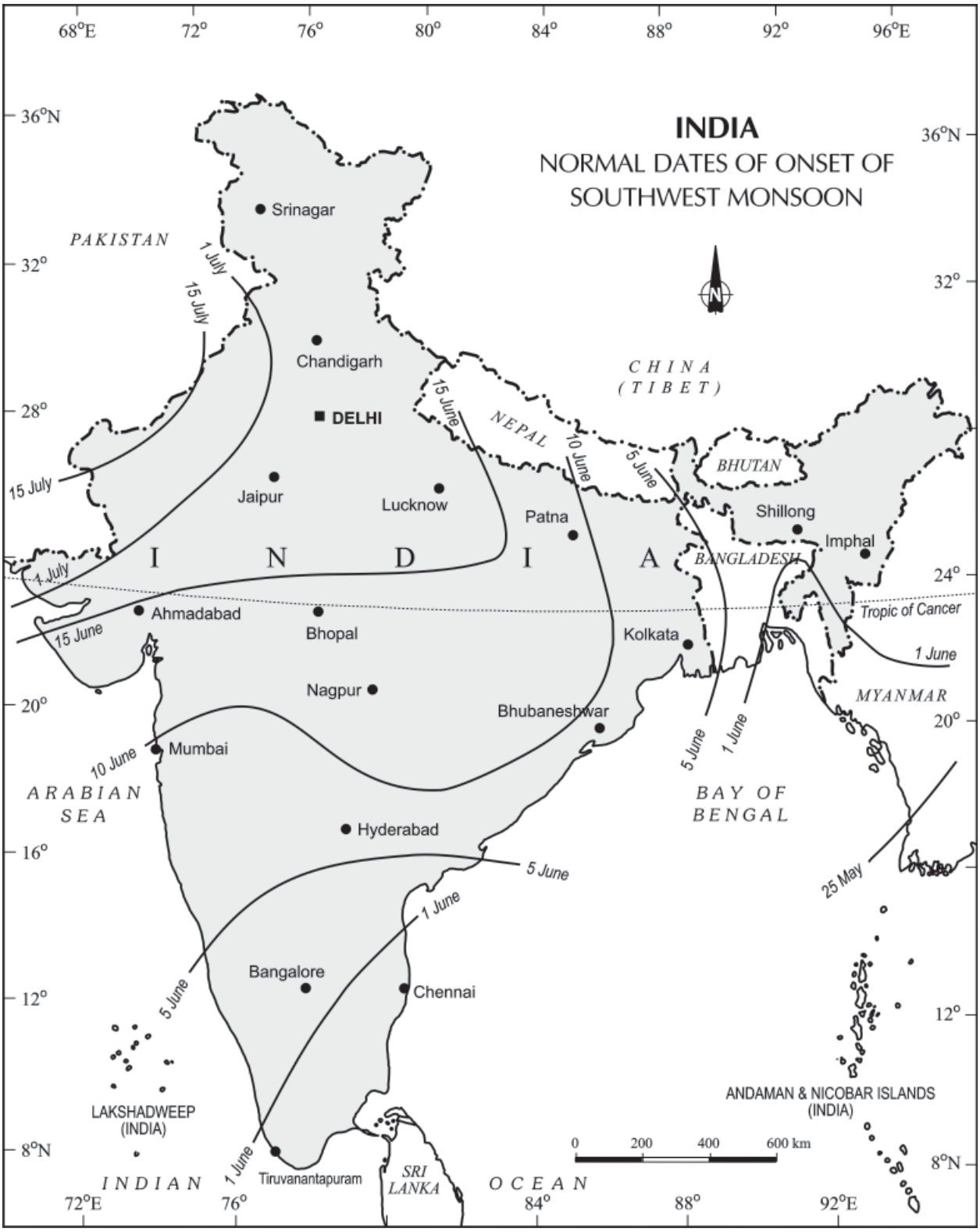


Figure 4.5 : India : Normal Dates of Onset of the Southwest Monsoon

The frequency of the tropical depressions originating from the Bay of Bengal varies from year to year. Their paths over India are mainly determined by the position of ITCZ which is generally termed as the monsoon trough. As the axis of the monsoon trough oscillates, there are fluctuations in the track and direction of these depressions, and the intensity and the amount of rainfall vary from year to year. The rain which comes in spells, displays a declining trend from west to east over the west coast, and from the southeast towards the northwest over the North Indian Plain and the northern part of the Peninsula.

Break in the Monsoon

During the south-west monsoon period after having rains for a few days, if rain fails to occur for one or more weeks, it is known as break in the monsoon. These dry spells are quite common during the rainy season. These breaks in the different regions are due to different reasons:

(i) In northern India rains are likely to fail if the rain-bearing storms are not very frequent along the monsoon trough or the ITCZ over this region.

(ii) Over the west coast the dry spells are associated with days when winds blow parallel to the coast.

The Rhythm of Seasons

The climatic conditions of India can best be described in terms of an annual cycle of seasons. The meteorologists recognise the following four seasons :

(i) the cold weather season
(ii) the hot weather season
(iii) the southwest monsoon season
(iv) the retreating monsoon season.

The Cold Weather Season

Temperature : Usually, the cold weather season sets in by mid-November in northern India. December and January are the coldest months in the northern plain. The mean daily temperature remains below 21°C over most parts of northern India. The night temperature may be quite low, sometimes going below freezing point in Punjab and Rajasthan.

There are three main reasons for the excessive cold in north India during this season :

(i) States like Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan being far away from the moderating influence of sea experience continental climate.

(ii) The snowfall in the nearby Himalayan ranges creates cold wave situation; and

(iii) Around February, the cold winds coming from the Caspian Sea and Turkmenistan bring cold wave along with frost and fog over the northwestern parts of India.

Understanding the Monsoon

Attempts have been made to understand the nature and mechanism of the monsoon on the basis of data collected on land, oceans and in the upper atmosphere. The intensity of southwest monsoon winds of southern oscillation can be measured, among others, by measuring the difference in pressure between Tahiti (roughly 20°S and 140°W) in French Polynesia in East Pacific and port Darwin (12°30'S and 131°E) in northern Australia. Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) can forecast the possible behaviour of monsoons on the basis of 16 indicators.

The Peninsular region of India, however, does not have any well-defined cold weather season. There is hardly any seasonal change in the distribution pattern of the temperature in coastal areas because of moderating influence of the sea and the proximity to equator. For example, the mean maximum temperature for January at Thiruvanantapuram is as high as 31°C, and for June, it is 29.5°C. Temperatures at the hills of Western Ghats remain comparatively low (Figure 4.6).

Pressure and Winds : By the end of December (22nd December), the sun shines vertically over the Tropic of Capricorn in the southern hemisphere. The weather in this season is characterised by feeble high pressure conditions over the northern plain. In south

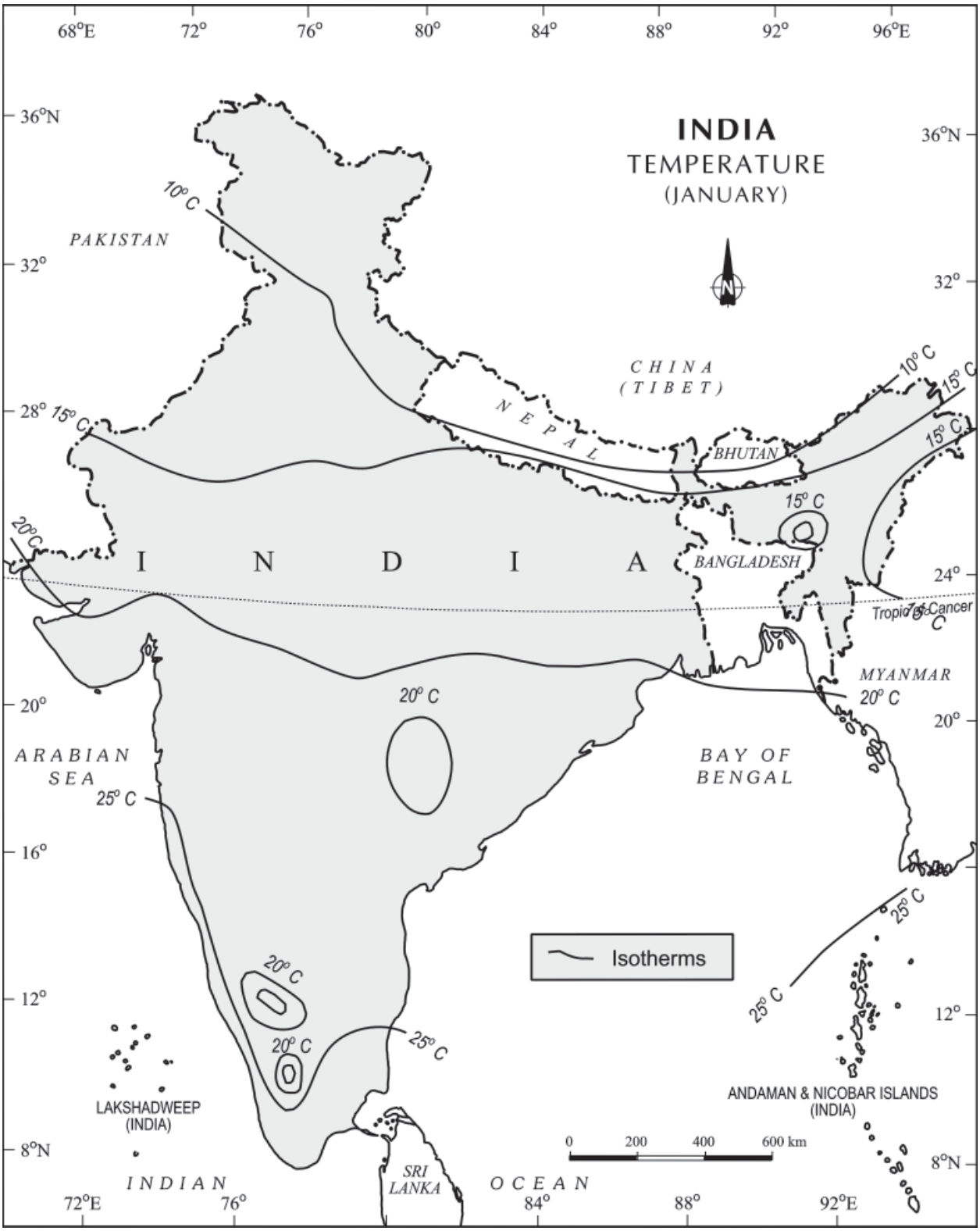


Figure 4.6 : India : Mean Monthly Temperatures of the Day in January

India, the air pressure is slightly lower. The isobars of 1019 mb and 1013 mb pass through northwest India and far south, respectively (Figure 4.7).

As a result, winds start blowing from northwestern high pressure zone to the low air pressure zone over the Indian Ocean in the south.

Due to low pressure gradient, the light winds with a low velocity of about 3-5 km per hour begin to blow outwards. By and large, the topography of the region influences the wind direction. They are westerly or northwesterly down the Ganga Valley. They become northerly in the Ganga-Brahmaputra delta. Free from the influence of topography, they are clearly northeasterly over the Bay of Bengal.

During the winters, the weather in India is pleasant. The pleasant weather conditions, however, at intervals, get disturbed by shallow cyclonic depressions originating over the east Mediterranean Sea and travelling eastwards across West Asia, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan before they reach the northwestern parts of India. On their way, the moisture content gets augmented from the Caspian Sea in the north and the Persian Gulf in the south. What is the role of Westerly Jet Streams in steering these depressions in India?

Rainfall : Winter monsoons do not cause rainfall as they move from land to the sea. It is because firstly, they have little humidity; and secondly, due to anti cyclonic circulation on land, the possibility of rainfall from them reduces. So, most parts of India do not have rainfall in the winter season. However, there are some exceptions to it:

(i) In northwestern India, some weak temperate cyclones from the Mediterranean sea cause rainfall in Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and western Uttar Pradesh. Although the amount is meagre, it is highly beneficial for rabi crops. The precipitation is in the form of snowfall in the lower Himalayas. It is this snow that sustains the flow of water in the Himalayan rivers during the summer months. The precipitation goes on decreasing from west to east in the plains and from north to south in the mountains. The average winter rainfall in Delhi is around 53 mm. In Punjab and Bihar, rainfall remains between 25 mm and 18 mm respectively.

(ii) Central parts of India and northern parts of southern Peninsula also get winter rainfall occasionally.

(iii) Arunachal Pradesh and Assam in the northeastern parts of India also have rains between 25 mm and 50 mm during these winter months.

(iv) During October and November, northeast monsoon while crossing over the Bay of Bengal, picks up moisture and causes torrential rainfall over the Tamil Nadu coast, southern Andhra Pradesh, southeast Karnataka and southeast Kerala.

The Hot Weather Season

Temperature: With the apparent northward movement of the sun towards the Tropic of Cancer in March, temperatures start rising in north India. April, May and June are the months of summer in north India. In most parts of India, temperatures recorded are between 30°-32°C. In March, the highest day temperature of about 38°C occurs in the Deccan Plateau while in April, temperature ranging between 38°C and 43°C are found in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. In May, the heat belt moves further north, and in the north-western part of India, temperatures around 48°C are not uncommon (Figure 4.8).

The hot weather season in south India is mild and not so intense as found in north India. The Peninsular situation of south India with moderating effect of the oceans keeps the temperatures lower than that prevailing in north India. So, temperatures remain between 26°C and 32°C. Due to altitude, the temperatures in the hills of Western Ghats remain below 25°C. In the coastal regions, the north-south extent of

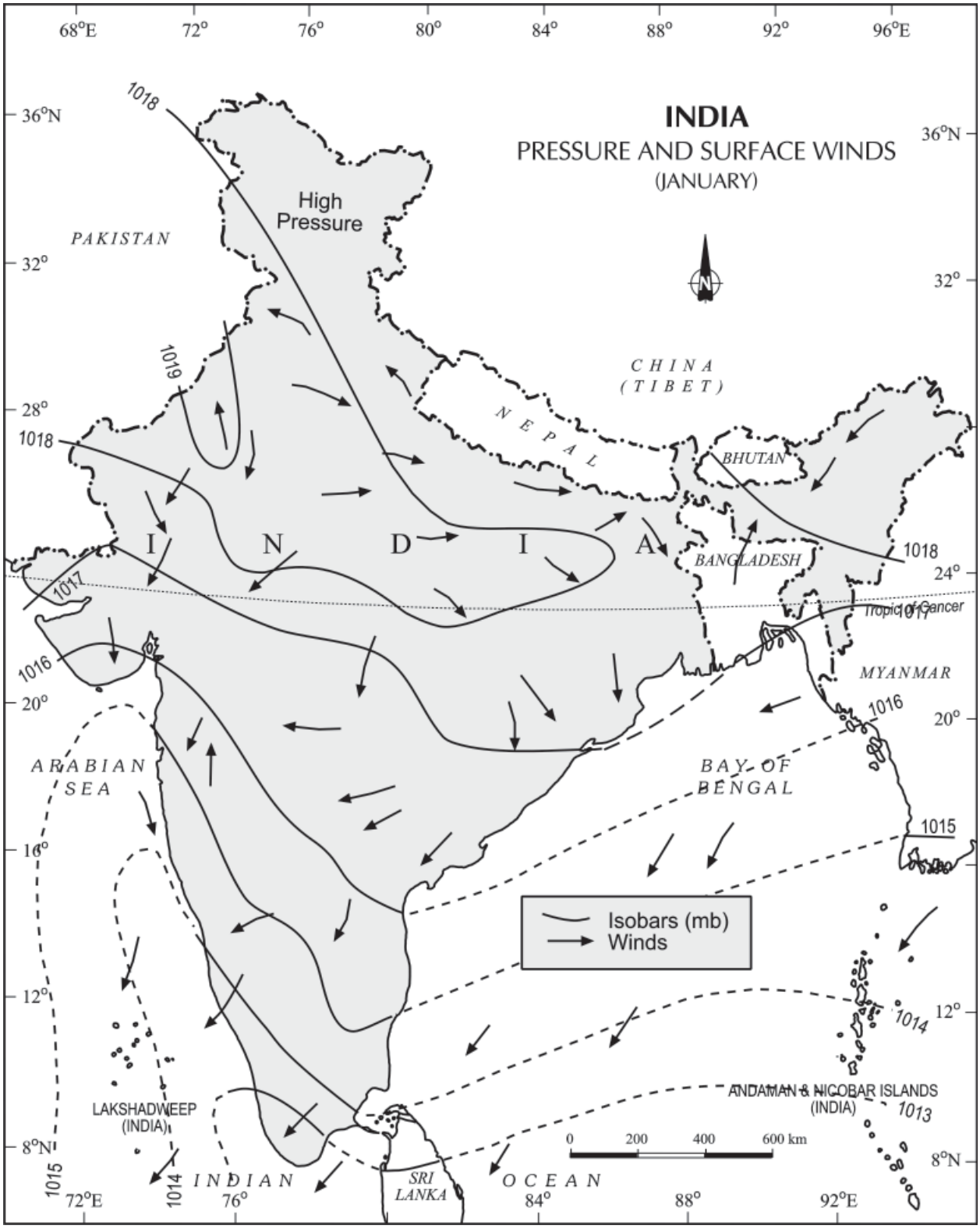


Figure 4.7 : India : Pressure and Surface Winds (January)

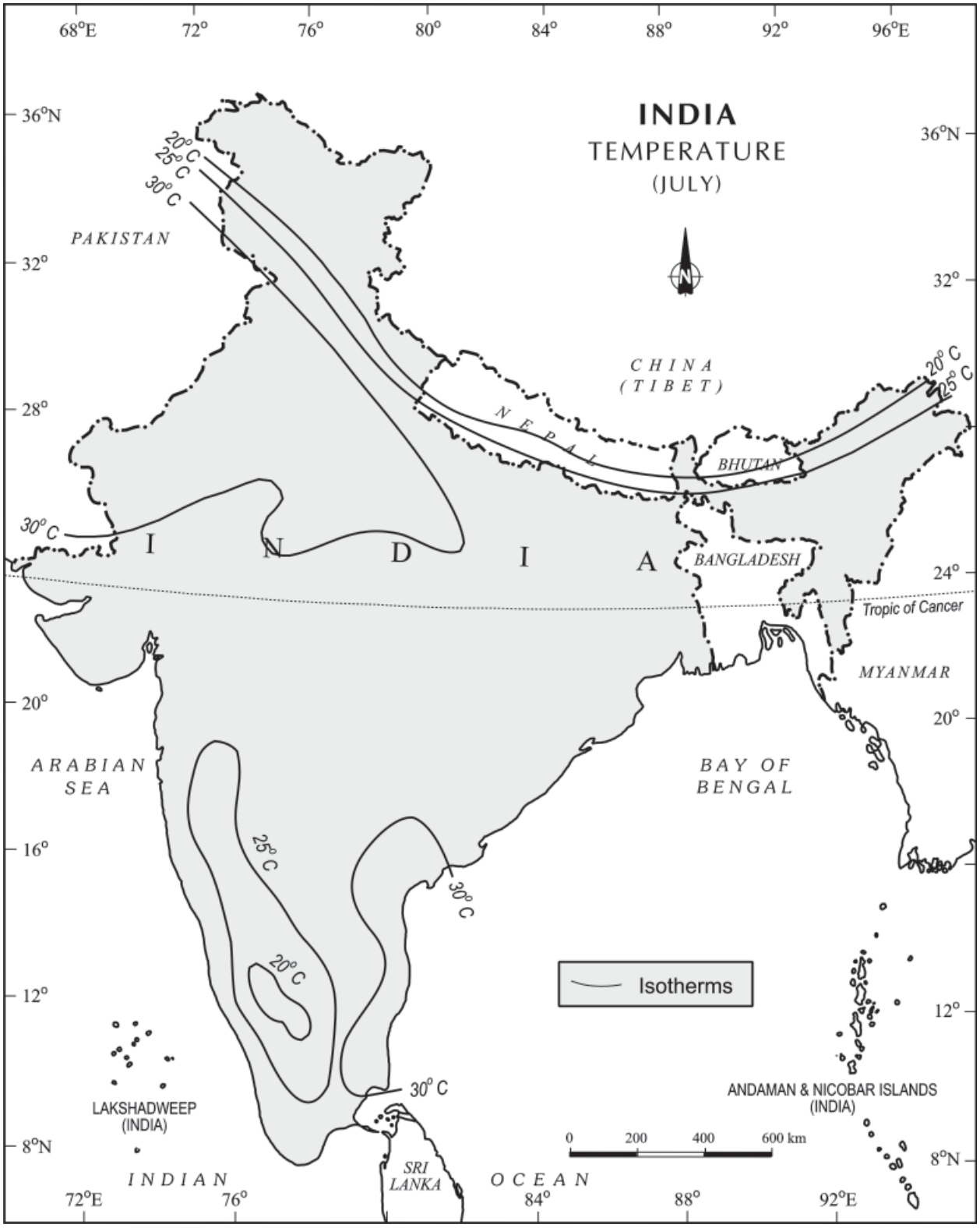


Figure 4.8 : India : Mean Monthly Temperature of the Day in July

isotherms parallel to the coast confirms that temperature does not decrease from north to south rather it increases from the coast to the interior. The mean daily minimum temperature during the summer months also remains quite high and rarely goes below 26°C.

Pressure and Winds : The summer months are a period of excessive heat and falling air pressure in the northern half of the country. Because of the heating of the subcontinent, the ITCZ moves northwards occupying a position centred at 25°N in July. Roughly, this elongated low pressure monsoon trough extends over the Thar desert in the north-west to Patna and Chotanagpur plateau in the east-southeast (Figure 4.9). The location of the ITCZ attracts a surface circulation of the winds which are southwesterly on the west coast as well as along the coast of West Bengal and Bangladesh. They are easterly or south-easterly over north Bengal and Bihar. It has been discussed earlier that these currents of southwesterly monsoon are in reality 'displaced' equatorial westerlies. The influx of these winds by mid-June brings about a change in the weather towards the rainy season.

In the heart of the ITCZ in the northwest, the dry and hot winds known as *'Loo'*, blow in the afternoon, and very often, they continue to well into midnight. Dust storms in the evening are very common during May in Punjab, Haryana, Eastern Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. These temporary storms bring a welcome respite from the oppressing heat since they bring with them light rains and a pleasant cool breeze. Occasionally, the moisture-laden winds are attracted towards the periphery of the trough. A sudden contact between dry and moist air masses gives rise to local storms of great intensity. These local storms are associated with violent winds, torrential rains and even hailstorms.

Some Famous Local Storms of Hot Weather Season

(i) *Mango Shower :* Towards the end of summer, there are pre-monsoon showers which are a common phenomena in Kerala and coastal areas of Karnataka. Locally, they are known as mango showers since they help in the early ripening of mangoes.

(ii) *Blossom Shower :* With this shower, coffee flowers blossom in Kerala and nearby areas.

(iii) *Nor Westers :* These are dreaded evening thunderstorms in Bengal and Assam. Their notorious nature can be understood from the local nomenclature of *'Kalbaisakhi'*, a calamity of the month of *Baisakh*. These showers are useful for tea, jute and rice cultivation. In Assam, these storms are known as *"Bardoli Chheerha"*.

(iv) *Loo :* Hot, dry and oppressing winds blowing in the Northern plains from Punjab to Bihar with higher intensity between Delhi and Patna.

The Southwest Monsoon Season

As a result of rapid increase of temperature in May over the northwestern plains, the low pressure conditions over there get further intensified. By early June, they are powerful enough to attract the trade winds of Southern Hemisphere coming from the Indian Ocean. These southeast trade winds cross the equator and enter the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea, only to be caught up in the air circulation over India. Passing over the equatorial warm currents, they bring with them moisture in abundance. After crossing the equator, they follow a southwesterly direction. That is why they are known as southwest monsoons.

The rain in the southwest monsoon season begins rather abruptly. One result of the first rain is that it brings down the temperature substantially. This sudden onset of the moisture-laden winds associated with violent thunder and lightening, is often termed as the "break" or "burst" of the

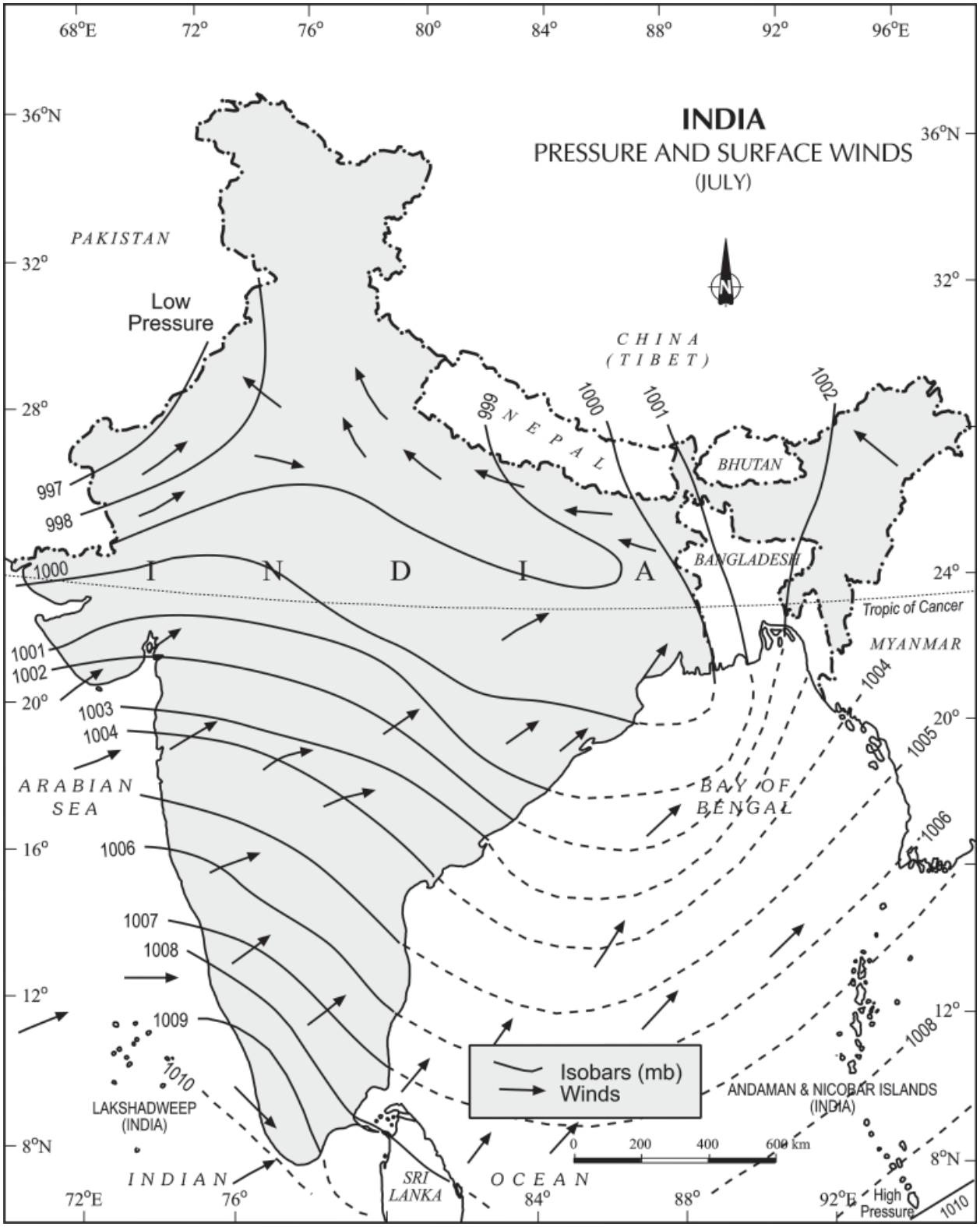


Figure 4.9 : India : Pressure and Surface Winds (July)

monsoons. The monsoon may burst in the first week of June in the coastal areas of Kerala, Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra while in the interior parts of the country, it may be delayed to the first week of July. The day temperature registers a decline of 5°C to 8°C between mid-June and mid-July.

As these winds approach the land, their southwesterly direction is modified by the relief and thermal low pressure over the northwest India. The monsoon approaches the landmass in two branches:

(i) The Arabian Sea branch
(ii) The Bay of Bengal branch.

Monsoon Winds of the Arabian Sea

The monsoon winds originating over the Arabian Sea further split into three branches:

(i) Its one branch is obstructed by the Western Ghats. These winds climb the slopes of the Western Ghats from 900-1200 m. Soon, they become cool, and as a result, the windward side of the Sahyadris and Western Coastal Plain receive very heavy rainfall ranging between 250 cm and 400 cm. After crossing the Western Ghats, these winds descend and get heated up. This reduces humidity in the winds. As a result, these winds cause little rainfall east of the Western Ghats. This region of low rainfall is known as the rain-shadow area. Find out the rainfall at Kozhikode, Mangalore, Pune and Bangalore and note the difference (Figure 4.10).

(ii) Another branch of the Arabian sea monsoon strikes the coast north of Mumbai. Moving along the Narmada and Tapi river valleys, these winds cause rainfall in extensive areas of central India. The Chotanagpur plateau gets 15 cm rainfall from this part of the branch. Thereafter, they enter the Ganga plains and mingle with the Bay of Bengal branch.

(iii) A third branch of this monsoon wind strikes the Saurashtra Peninsula and the Kachchh. It then passes over west Rajasthan and along the Aravallis, causing only a scanty rainfall. In Punjab and Haryana, it too joins the Bay of Bengal branch. These two branches, reinforced by each other, cause rains in the western Himalayas,

Monsoon Winds of the Bay of Bengal

The Bay of Bengal branch strikes the coast of Myanmar and part of southeast Bangladesh. But the Arakan Hills along the coast of Myanmar deflect a big portion of this branch towards the Indian subcontinent. The monsoon, therefore, enters West Bengal and Bangladesh from south and southeast instead of from the south-westerly direction. From here, this branch splits into two under the influence of the Himalayas and the thermal low is northwest India. Its one branch moves westward along the Ganga plains reaching as far as the Punjab plains. The other branch moves up the Brahmaputra valley in the north and the northeast, causing widespread rains. Its sub-branch strikes the Garo and Khasi hills of Meghalaya. Mawsynram, located on the crest of Khasi hills, receives the highest average annual rainfall in the world.

Here it is important to know why the Tamil Nadu coast remains dry during this season. There are two factors responsible for it:

(i) The Tamil Nadu coast is situated parallel to the Bay of Bengal branch of southwest monsoon.
(ii) It lies in the rainshadow area of the Arabian Sea branch of the south-west monsoon.

Characteristics of Monsoonal Rainfall

(i) Rainfall received from the southwest monsoons is seasonal in character, which occurs between June and September.
(ii) Monsoonal rainfall is largely governed by relief or topography. For instance the windward side of the Western Ghats register a rainfall of over 250 cm. Again, the heavy rainfall in the northeastern states can be attributed to their hill ranges and the Eastern Himalayas.

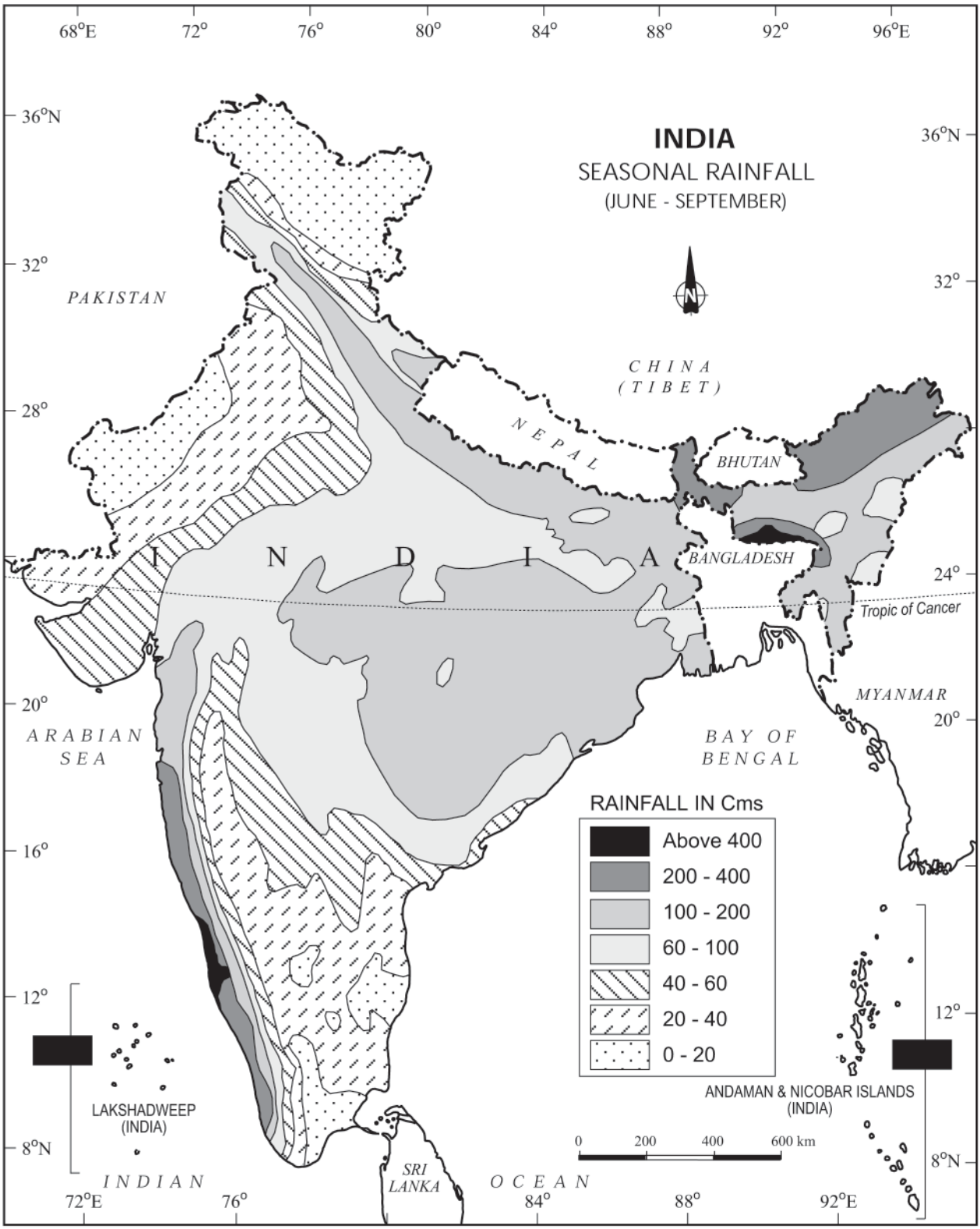


Figure 4.10 : India : Seasonal Rainfall (June-September)

(iii) The monsoon rainfall has a declining trend with increasing distance from the sea. Kolkata receives 119 cm during the southwest monsoon period, Patna 105 cm, Allahabad 76 cm and Delhi 56 cm.

(iv) The monsoon rains occur in wet spells of few days duration at a time. The wet spells are interspersed with rainless interval known as 'breaks'. These breaks in rainfall are related to the cyclonic depressions mainly formed at the head of the Bay of Bengal, and their crossing into the mainland. Besides the frequency and intensity of these depressions, the passage followed by them determines the spatial distribution of rainfall.

(v) The summer rainfall comes in a heavy downpour leading to considerable run off and soil erosion.

(vi) Monsoons play a pivotal role in the agrarian economy of India because over three-fourths of the total rain in the country is received during the south-west monsoon season.

(vii) Its spatial distribution is also uneven which ranges from 12 cm to more than 250 cm.

(viii) The beginning of the rains sometimes is considerably delayed over the whole or a part of the country.

(ix) The rains sometimes end considerably earlier than usual, causing great damage to standing crops and making the sowing of winter crops difficult.

Season of Retreating Monsoon

The months of October and November are known for retreating monsoons. By the end of September, the southwest monsoon becomes weak as the low pressure trough of the Ganga plain starts moving southward in response to the southward march of the sun. The monsoon retreats from the western Rajasthan by the first week of September. It withdraws from Rajasthan, Gujarat, Western Ganga plain and the Central Highlands by the end of the month. By the beginning of October, the low pressure covers northern parts of the Bay of Bengal and by early November, it moves over Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. By the middle of December, the centre of low pressure is completely removed from the Peninsula.

The retreating southwest monsoon season is marked by clear skies and rise in temperature. The land is still moist. Owing to the conditions of high temperature and humidity, the weather becomes rather oppressive. This is commonly known as the 'October heat'. In the second half of October, the mercury begins to fall rapidly, particularly in northern India. The weather in the retreating monsoon is dry in north India but it is associated with rain in the eastern part of the Peninsula. Here, October and November are the rainiest months of the year.

The widespread rain in this season is associated with the passage of cyclonic depressions which originate over the Andaman Sea and manage to cross the eastern coast of the southern Peninsula. These tropical cyclones are very destructive. The thickly populated deltas of the Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri are their preferred targets. Every year cyclones bring disaster here. A few cyclonic storms also strike the coast of West Bengal, Bangladesh and Myanmar. A bulk of the rainfall of the Coromondal coast is derived from these depressions and cyclones. Such cyclonic storms are less frequent in the Arabian Sea.

Traditional Indian Seasons

In the Indian tradition, a year is divided into six two-monthly seasons. This cycle of seasons, which the common people in north and central India follow is based on their practical experience and age-old perception of weather phenomena. However, this system does not match with the seasons of south India where there is little variation in the seasons.

Seasons	*Months (According to the Indian Calendar)*	*Months (According to the Indian Calendar)*
Vasanta	Chaitra-Vaisakha	March-April
Grishma	Jyaistha-Asadha	May-June
Varsha	Sravana-Bhadra	July-August
Sharada	Asvina-Kartika	September-October
Hemanta	Margashirsa-Pausa	November-December
Shishira	Magha-Phalguna	January-February

Distribution of Rainfall

The average annual rainfall in India is about 125 cm, but it has great spatial variations (Figure 4.11).

Areas of High Rainfall : The highest rainfall occurs along the west coast, on the Western Ghats, as well as in the sub-Himalayan areas is the northeast and the hills of Meghalaya. Here the rainfall exceeds 200 cm. In some parts of Khasi and Jaintia hills, the rainfall exceeds 1,000 cm. In the Brahmaputra valley and the adjoining hills, the rainfall is less then 200 cm.

Areas of Medium Rainfall : Rainfall between 100-200 cm is received in the southern parts of Gujarat, east Tamil Nadu, northeastern Peninsula covering Orissa, Jharkhand, Bihar, eastern Madhya Pradesh, northern Ganga plain along the sub-Himalayas and the Cachar Valley and Manipur.

Areas of Low Rainfall : Western Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, eastern Rajasthan, Gujarat and Deccan Plateau receive rainfall between 50-100 cm.

Areas of Inadequate Rainfall: Parts of the Peninsula, especially in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra, Ladakh and most of western Rajasthan receive rainfall below 50 cm.

Snowfall is restricted to the Himalayan region.

Identify the pattern of rainfall after consulting the rainfall map.

Variability of Rainfall

A characteristic feature of rainfall in India is its variability. The variability of rainfall is computed with the help of the following formula:

$$\text{C.V.} = \frac{\text{Standard Deviation}}{\text{Mean}} \times 100$$

where C.V. is the coefficient of variation.

The values of coefficient of variation show the change from the mean values of rainfall. The actual rainfall in some places deviates from 20-50 per cent. The values of coefficient of variation show variability of rainfall in India. A variability of less than 25 per cent exists on the western coasts, Western Ghats, northeastern Peninsula, eastern plains of the Ganga, northeastern India, Uttaranchal and Himachal Pradesh and south-western part of Jammu and Kashmir. These areas have an annual rainfall of over 100 cm. A variability of over 50 per cent exists in the western part of Rajasthan, northern part of Jammu and Kashmir and interior parts of the Deccan plateau. These areas have an annual rainfall of less than 50 cm. Rest of India have a variability of 25-50 per cent and these areas receive an annual rainfall between 50 -100 cm (Figure 4.12).

Climatic Regions of India

The whole of India has a monsoon type of climate. But the combination of elements of the weather, however, reveal many regional variations. These variations represent the sub-types of the monsoon climate. It is on this basis that the climatic regions can be identified. A climatic region has a homogeneous climatic condition which is the result of a combination of factors. Temperature and rainfall are two important elements which are considered to be decisive in all the schemes of climatic classification. The classification of climate, however, is a complex exercise. There are different schemes of classification of climate. Major climatic types of India based on *Koeppen's* scheme have been described below:

Koeppen based his scheme of Climatic classification on monthly values of temperature and precipitation. He identified five major climatic types, namely:

(i) Tropical climates, where mean monthly temperature throughout the year is over 18°C.

(ii) Dry climates, where precipitation is very low in comparison to temperature, and hence, dry. If dryness is less, it is semi-arid (S); if it is more, the climate is arid(W).

(iii) Warm temperate climates, where mean temperature of the coldest month is between 18°C and minus 3°C.

(iv) Cool temperate climates, where mean temperature of the warmest month is over 10°C, and mean temperature of the coldest month is under minus 3°C.

(v) Ice climates, where mean temperature of the warmest month is under 10°C.

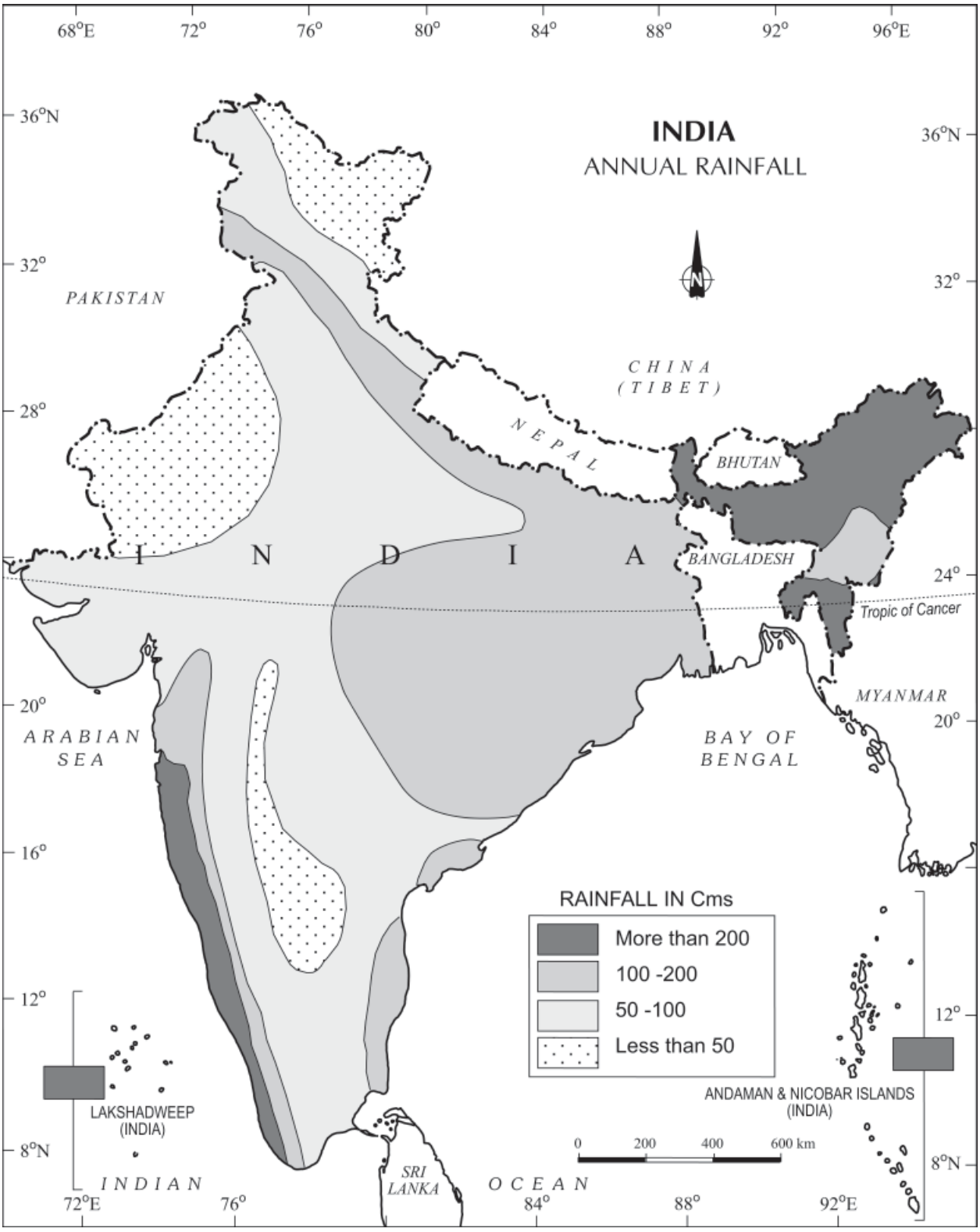


Figure 4.11 : India : Annual Rainfall

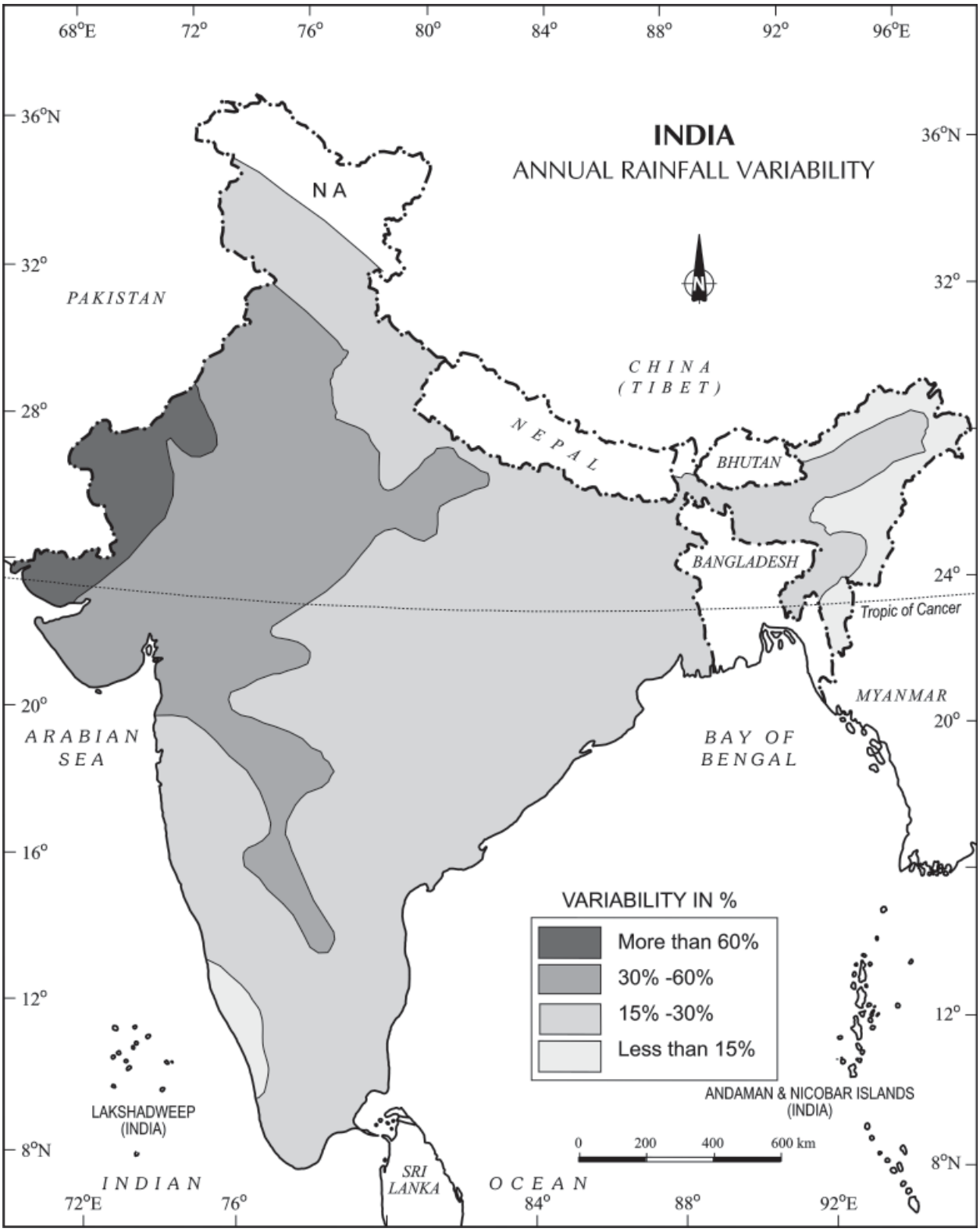


Figure 4.12 : India : Variability of Annual Rainfall

Koeppen used letter symbols to denote climatic types as given above. Each type is further sub-divided into sub-types on the basis of seasonal variations in the distributional pattern of rainfall and temperature. He used S for semi-arid and W for arid and the following small letters to define sub-types: f (sufficient precipitation), m (rain forest despite a dry monsoon season), w (dry season in winter), h (dry and hot), c (less than four months with mean temperature over 10°C), and g (Gangetic plain). Accordingly, India can be divided into eight climatic regions (Table 4.1; Figure 4.13).

Table 4.1 : Climatic Regions of India According to Koeppen's Scheme

Type of Climate	*Areas*
Amw Monsoon with short dry season	West coast of India south of Goa
As – Monsoon with dry summer	Coromandel coast of Tamil Nadu
Aw – Tripical savannah	Most of the Peninsular plateaus, south of the Tropic of Cancer
Bwhw – Semi-arid steppe climate	North-western Gujarat, some parts of western Rajasthan and Punjab
Bwhw – Hot desert	Extreme western Rajasthan
Cwg – Monsoon with dry winter	Ganga plain, eastern Rajasthan, northern Madhya Pradesh, most of North-east India
Dfc – Cold humid winter with short summer	Arunachal Pradesh
E – Polar type	Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttaranchal

Monsoons and the Economic Life in India

(i) Monsoon is that axis around which revolves the entire agricultural cycle of India. It is because about 64 per cent people of India depend on agriculture for their livelihood and agriculture itself is based on southwest monsoon.

(ii) Except Himalayas all the parts of the country have temperature above the threashold level to grow the crops or plants throughout the year..

(iii) Regional variations in monsoon climate help in growing various types of crops.

(iv) Variability of rainfall brings droughts or floods every year in some parts of the country.

(v) Agricultural prosperity of India depends very much on timely and adequately distributed rainfall. If it fails, agriculture is adversely affected particularly in those regions where means of irrigation are not developed.

(vi) Sudden monsoon burst creates problem of soil erosion over large areas in India.

(vii) Winter rainfall by temperate cyclones in north India is highly beneficial for rabi crops.

(viii) Regional climatic variation in India is reflected in the vast variety of food, clothes and house types.

GLOBAL WARMING

You know that change is the law of nature. Climate has also witnessed change in the past at the global as well as at local levels. It is changing even now but the change is imperceptible. A number of geological evidences suggest that once upon a time, (see geological time scale in Chapter 2 of *Fundamentals of Physical Geography*, NCERT, 2006) large part of the earth was under ice cover. Now you might have read or heard the debate on global warming. Besides the natural causes, human activities such as large scale industrialisation and presence of polluting gas in the atmosphere are also important factors responsible for global warming. You might have heard about the "green house effect" while discussing global warming.

The temperature of the world is significantly increasing. Carbon dioxide produced by human activities is a major source of concern. This gas, released to the atmosphere in large quantities by burning of fossil fuel, is increasing gradually. Other gases like methane, chlorofluorocarbons, and nitrous oxide which are present in much smaller concentrations in the atmosphere, together with carbon dioxide are known as green house gases. These gases are better absorbers of long wave radiations than carbon

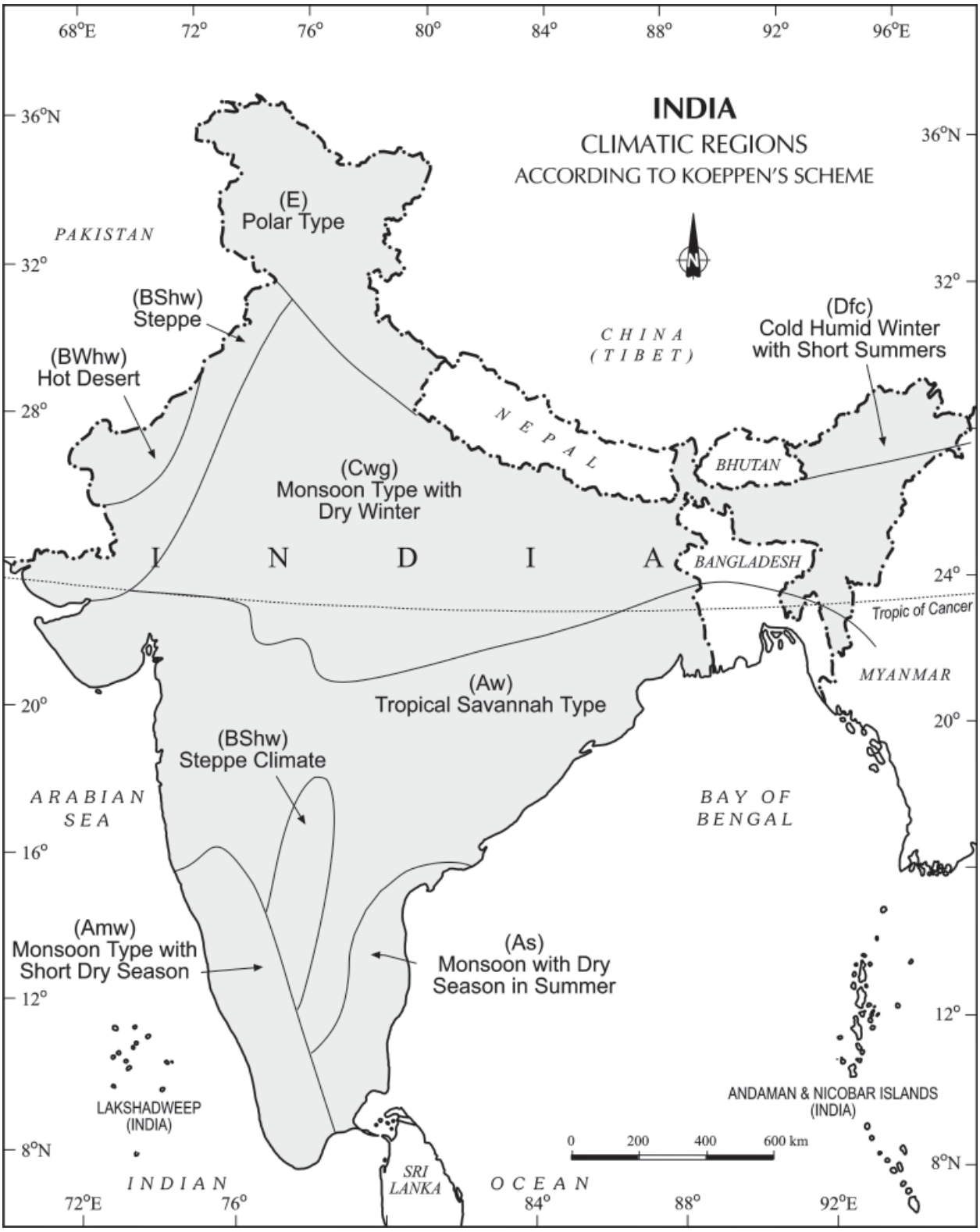


Figure 4.13 : India : Climatic Regions According to Koppen's Scheme

dioxide, and so, are more effective at enhancing the green house effect. These gases have been contributing to global warming. It is said that due to global warming the polar ice caps and mountain glaciers would melt and the amount of water in the oceans would increase.

The mean annual surface temperature of the earth in the past 150 years has increased. It is projected that by the year 2,100, global temperature will warm about 2°C. This rise in temperature will accompany many other changes: one of these is a rise in sea level, as glacier and sea ice melt in response to warming. According to the current prediction, on an average, the sea level will rise 48 cm by the end of twenty first century. This would increase the incidence of annual flooding. Climatic change would promote insect-borne diseases like malaria, and lead to shift in climatic boundaries, making some regions wetter and others drier. Agricultural pattern would shift and human population as well as the ecosystem would experience change. What would happen to the Indian sea coasts if the sea level rises 50 cm above the present one?

EXERCISES

1. Choose the right answer from the four alternatives given below.

   (i) What causes rainfall on the coastal areas of Tamil Nadu in the beginning of winters?

   (a) South-West monsoon (c) North-Eastern monsoon

   (b) Temperate cyclones (d) Local air circulation

   (ii) What is the proportion of area of India which receives annual rainfall less than 75 cm?

   (a) Half (c) Two-third

   (b) One-third (d) Three-fourth

   (iii) Which one of the following is not a fact regarding South India?

   (a) Diurnal range of temperature is less here.

   (b) Annual range of temperature is less here.

   (c) Temperatures here are high throughout the year.

   (d) Extreme climatic conditions are found here.

   (iv) Which one of the following phenomenon happens when the sun shines vertically over the Tropic of Capricorn in the southern hemisphere?

   (a) High pressure develops over North-western India due to low temperatures.

   (b) Low pressure develops over North-western India due to high temperatures.

   (c) No changes in temperature and pressure occur in north-western India.

   (d) 'Loo' blows in the North-western India.

   (v) In which of the following states in India do we find 'As' type of climate as per Koeppen's classification?

   (a) In Kerala and coastal Karnataka

   (b) In Andaman and Nicobar Islands

   (c) On Coromandal coast

   (d) In Assam and Arunachal Pradesh

2. Answer the following questions in about 30 words.
   (i) What are the three important factors which influence the mechanism of Indian weather?
   (ii) What is the Inter-Tropical Convergene Zone?
   (iii) What is meant by 'bursting of monsoon'? Name the place of India which gets the highest rainfall.
   (iv) Define 'climatic region'? What are the bases of Koeppen's classification?
   (v) Which type(s) of cyclones cause rainfall in north-western India during winter? Where do they originate?
3. Answer the following questions in not more than 125 words.
   (i) Notwithstanding the broad climatic unity, the climate of India has many regional variations. Elaborate this statement giving suitable examples.
   (ii) How many distinct seasons are found in India as per the Indian Meteorological Department? Discuss the weather conditions associated with any one season in detail.

Project/Activity

On the outline map of India, show the following:
   (i) Areas of winter rain
   (ii) Wind direction during the summer season
   (iii) Areas having variability of rainfall over 50 per cent
   (iv) Areas having less than 15°C temperature in January
   (v) Isohyte of 100 cm.

CHAPTER

5

NATURAL VEGETATION

Have you ever been to a forest for a picnic? You might have surely gone to a park if you live in a city or to a mango, guava or coconut orchard, if you live in a village. How do you differentiate between the natural vegetation and the planted vegetation? The same variety may be found growing wild in the forest under natural conditions and the same tree may be the planted one in your garden under human supervision.

Natural vegetation refers to a plant community that has been left undisturbed over a long time, so as to allow its individual species to adjust themselves to climate and soil conditions as fully as possible.

India is a land of great variety of natural vegetation. Himalayan heights are marked with temperate vegetation; the Western Ghats and the Andaman Nicobar Islands have tropical rain forests, the deltaic regions have tropical forests and mangroves; the desert and semi desert areas of Rajasthan are known for cactii, a wide variety of bushes and thorny vegetation. Depending upon the variations in the climate and the soil, the vegetation of India changes from one region to another.

On the basis of certain common features such as predominant vegetation type and climatic regions, Indian forests can be divided into the following groups:

TYPES OF FORESTS

(i) Tropical Evergreen and Semi Evergreen forests
(ii) Tropical Deciduous forests
(iii) Tropical Thorn forests
(iv) Montane forests
(v) Littoral and Swamp forests.

Tropical Evergreen and Semi Evergreen Forests

These forests are found in the western slope of the Western Ghats, hills of the northeastern region and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. They are found in warm and humid areas with an annual precipitation of over 200 cm and mean annual temperature above 22°C. Tropical evergreen forests are well stratified, with layers closer to the ground and are covered with shrubs and creepers, with short structured trees followed by tall variety of trees. In these forests, trees reach great heights up to 60 m or above. There is no definite time for trees to shed their leaves, flowering and fruition. As such these forests appear green all the year round. Species found in these forests include rosewood, mahogony, aini, ebony, etc.

The semi evergreen forests are found in the less rainy parts of these regions. Such forests have a mixture of evergreen and moist deciduous trees. The undergrowing climbers provide an evergreen character to these forests. Main species are white cedar, hollock and kail.

Figure 5.1 : Evergreen Forest

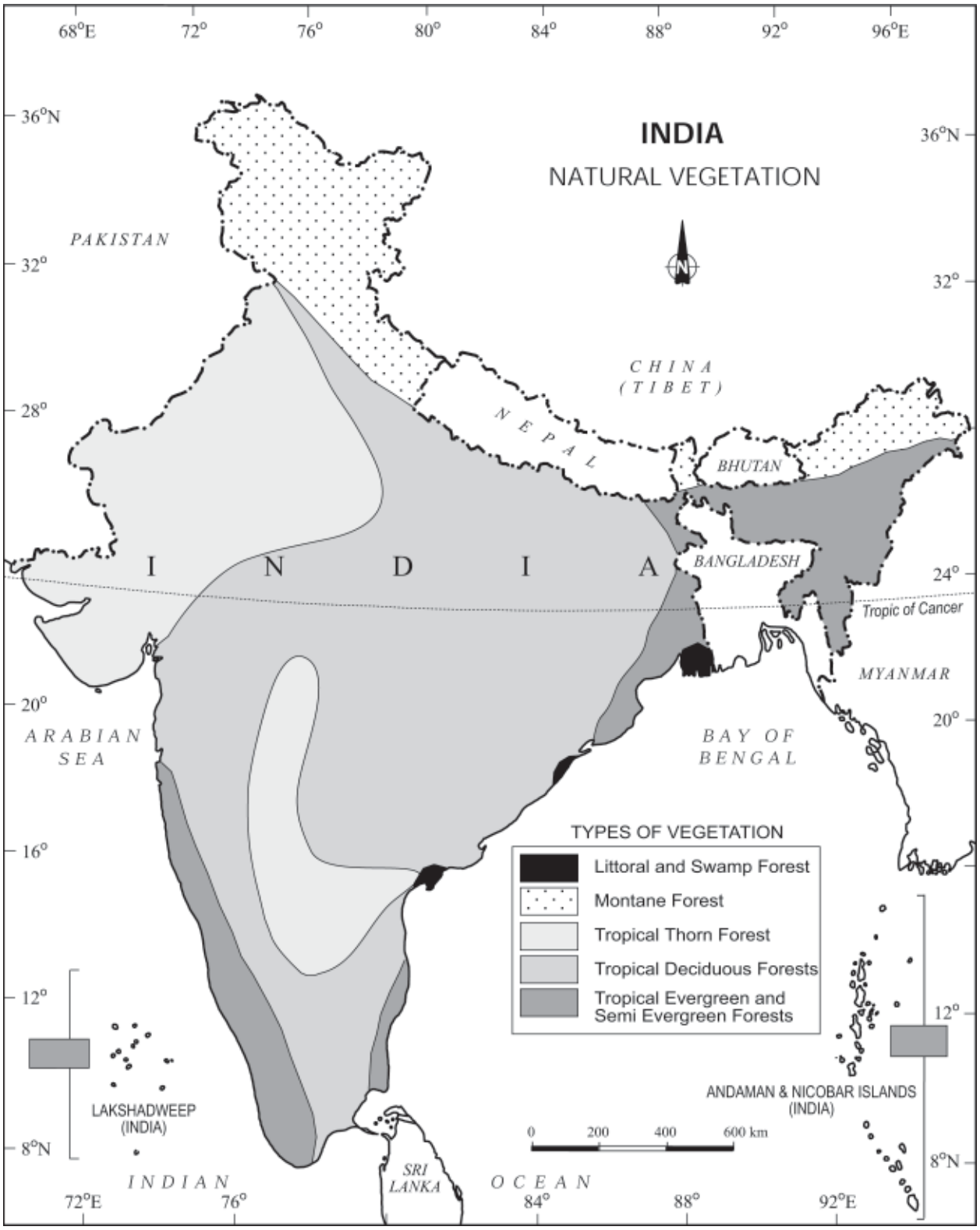


Figure 5.2 : Natural Vegetation

The British were aware of the economic value of the forests in India, hence, large scale exploitation of these forests was started. The structure of forests was also changed. The oak forests in Garhwal and Kumaon were replaced by pine (chirs) which was needed to lay railway lines. Forests were also cleared for introducing plantations of tea, rubber and coffee. The British also used timber for construction activities as it acts as an insulator of heat. The protectional use of forests was, thus, replaced by commercial use.

Tropical Deciduous Forests

These are the most widespread forests in India. They are also called the monsoon forests. They spread over regions which receive rainfall between 70-200 cm. On the basis of the availability of water, these forests are further divided into moist and dry deciduous.

Figure 5.3 : Deciduous Forests

The Moist deciduous forests are more pronounced in the regions which record rainfall between 100-200 cm. These forests are found in the northeastern states along the foothills of Himalayas, eastern slopes of the Western Ghats and Orissa. Teak, *sal, shisham, hurra, mahua, amla, semul, kusum,* and sandalwood etc. are the main species of these forests.

Dry deciduous forest covers vast areas of the country, where rainfall ranges between 70 -100 cm. On the wetter margins, it has a transition to the moist deciduous, while on the drier margins to thorn forests. These forests are found in rainier areas of the Peninsula and the plains of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. In the higher rainfall regions of the Peninsular plateau and the northern Indian plain, these forests have a parkland landscape with open stretches in which teak and other trees interspersed with patches of grass are common. As the dry season begins, the trees shed their leaves completely and the forest appears like a vast grassland with naked trees all around. *Tendu, palas, amaltas, bel, khair,* axlewood, etc. are the common trees of these forests. In the western and southern part of Rajasthan, vegetation cover is very scanty due to low rainfall and overgrazing.

Tropical Thorn Forests

Tropical thorn forests occur in the areas which receive rainfall less than 50 cm. These consist of a variety of grasses and shrubs. It includes semi-arid areas of south west Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. In these forests, plants remain leafless for most part of the year and give an expression of scrub vegetation. Important species found are *babool, ber*, and wild date palm, *khair, neem, khejri, palas*, etc. Tussocky grass grows upto a height of 2 m as the under growth.

Figure 5.4 : Tropical Thorn Forests

Montane Forests

In mountainous areas, the decrease in temperature with increasing altitude leads to a corresponding change in natural vegetation. Mountain forests can be classified into two types, the northern mountain forests and the southern mountain forests.

The Himalayan ranges show a succession of vegetation from the tropical to the tundra, which change in with the altitude. Deciduous forests are found in the foothills of the Himalayas. It is succeeded by the wet temperate type of forests between an altitude of 1,000-2,000 m. In the higher hill ranges of northeastern India, hilly areas of West Bengal and Uttaranchal, evergreen broad leaf trees such as oak and chestnut are predominant. Between 1,500-1,750 m, pine forests are also well-developed in this zone, with Chir Pine as a very useful commercial tree. Deodar, a highly valued endemic species grows mainly in the western part of the Himalayan range. Deodar is a durable wood mainly used in construction activity. Similarly, the *chinar* and the walnut, which sustain the famous Kashmir handicrafts, belong to this zone. Blue pine and spruce appear at altitudes of 2,225-3,048 m. At many places in this zone, temperate grasslands are also found. But in the higher reaches there is a transition to Alpine forests and pastures. Silver firs, junipers, pines, birch and rhododendrons, etc. occur between 3,000-4,000 m. However, these pastures are used extensively for transhumance by tribes like the Gujjars, the Bakarwals, the Bhotiyas and the Gaddis. The southern slopes of the Himalayas carry a thicker vegetation cover because of relatively higher precipitation than the drier north-facing slopes. At higher altitudes, mosses and lichens form part of the tundra vegetation.

Figure 5.5 : Montane Forests

The southern mountain forests include the forests found in three distinct areas of Peninsular India viz; the Western Ghats, the Vindhyas and the Nilgiris. As they are closer to the tropics, and only 1,500 m above the sea level, vegetation is temperate in the higher regions, and subtropical on the lower regions of the Western Ghats, especially in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. The temperate forests are called *Sholas* in the Nilgiris, Anaimalai and Palani hills. Some of the other trees of this forest of economic significance include, magnolia, laurel, cinchona and wattle. Such forests are also found in the Satpura and the Maikal ranges.

Littoral and Swamp Forests

India has a rich variety of wetland habitats. About 70 per cent of this comprises areas under paddy cultivation. The total area of wet land is 3.9 million hectares. Two sites — Chilika Lake (Orissa) and Keoladeo National Park (Bharatpur) are protected as water-fowl habitats under the Convention of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention).

> An international convention is an agreement among member states of the United Nations.

The country's wetlands have been grouped into eight categories, viz. (i) the reservoirs of the Deccan Plateau in the south together with the lagoons and other wetlands of the southern west coast; (ii) the vast saline expanses of Rajasthan, Gujarat and the Gulf of Kachchh; (iii) freshwater lakes and reservoirs from Gujarat eastwards through Rajasthan (Keoladeo National Park) and Madhya Pradesh; (iv) the delta wetlands and lagoons of India's east coast (Chilika Lake); (v) the freshwater marshes of the Gangetic Plain; (vi) the floodplains of the Brahmaputra; the marshes and swamps in the hills of northeast India and the Himalayan foothills; (vii) the lakes and rivers of the montane region of Kashmir and Ladakh; and (viii) the mangrove forest and other wetlands of the island arcs of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Mangroves grow along the coasts in the salt marshes, tidal creeks, mud flats and estuaries.

They consist of a number of salt-tolerant species of plants. Crisscrossed by creeks of stagnant water and tidal flows, these forests give shelter to a wide variety of birds.

Figure 5.6 : Mangrove Forests

In India, the mangrove forests spread over 6,740 sq. km which is 7 per cent of the world's mangrove forests. They are highly developed in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and the Sunderbans of West Bengal. Other areas of significance are the Mahanadi, the Godavari and the Krishna deltas. These forests too, are being encroached upon, and hence, need conservation.

Forest Cover in India

According to state records, the forest area covers 23.28 per cent of the total land area of the country. It is important to note that the forest area and the actual forest cover are not the same. The forest area is the area notified and recorded as the forest land irrespective of the existence of trees, while the actual forest cover is the area occupied by forests with canopy. The former is based on the records of the State Revenue Department, while the latter is based on aerial photographs and satellite imageries. In 2001, the actual forest cover was only 20.55 per cent. Of the forest cover, the share of dense and open forests was 12.60 per cent and 7.87 per cent rerspectively.

Both forest area and forest cover vary from state to state. Lakshadweep has zero per cent forest area; Andaman and Nicobar Islands have 86.93 per cent. Most of the states with less than 10 per cent of the forest area lie in the north and northwestern part of the country. These are Rajasthan, Gujarat, Punjab, Haryana and Delhi. Most of the forests in Punjab and Haryana have been cleared for cultivation. States with 10-20 per cent forest area are Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. In Peninsular India, excluding Tamil Nadu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Goa, the area under forest cover is 20-30 per cent. The northeastern states have more than 30 per cent of the land under forest. Hilly topography and heavy rainfall are good for forest growth.

There is a lot of variation in actual forest cover, which ranges from 9.56 per cent in Jammu and Kashmir to 84.01 per cent in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. From the table showing the distribution of forests in India (Appendix IV), it is clear that there are 15 states where the forest cover is more than one-third of the total area, which is the basic requirement for maintaining the ecological balance.

On the basis of the percentage of the actual forest cover, the states have been grouped into four regions:

The Region	*Percentage Cover of the Forest*
(i) The region of high concentration	> 40
(ii) The region of medium concentration	20-40
(iii) The region of low concentration	10-20
(iv) The region of very low concentration	< 10

Taking the data from Appendix IV, list the states under the four regins of forest cover

Forest Conservation

Forests have an intricate interrelationship with life and environment. These provide numerous direct and indirect advantages to our economy and society. Hence, conservation of forest is of vital importance to the survival and prosperity of humankind. Accordingly, the Government of India proposed to have a nation-wide forest conservation policy, and adopted a forest policy in 1952, which was further modified in 1988. According to the new forest policy, the Government will emphasise sustainable forest management in order to conserve and expand forest reserve on the one hand, and to meet the needs of local people on the other.

The forest policy aimed at : (i) bringing 33 per cent of the geographical areas under forest

cover; (ii) maintaining environmental stability and to restore forests where ecological balance was disturbed; (iii) conserving the natural heritage of the country, its biological diversity and genetic pool; (iv) checks soil erosion, extension of the desert lands and reduction of floods and droughts; (v) increasing the forest cover through social forestry and afforestation on degraded land; (vi) increasing the productivity of forests to make timber, fuel, fodder and food available to rural population dependant on forests, and encourage the substitution of wood; (vii) creating of a massive peoples movement involving women to encourage planting of trees, stop felling of trees and thus, reduce pressure on the existing forest.

Forests and Life

To a vast number of tribal people, the forest is a home, a livelihood, their very existence. It provides them food, fruits of all kinds, edible leaves, honey, nourishing roots and wild game. It provides them with material to build their houses and items for practising their arts. The importance of forests in tribal economy is well-known as they are the source of sustenance and livelihood for tribal communities. It is commonly believed that the tribal communities live in harmony with nature and protect forests. Out of a total of 593 districts 187 (2001) have been identified as tribal districts. The tribal districts account for about 59.8 per cent of the total forest cover of the country whereas the geographical area of 187 tribal districts forms only 33.6 per cent of the total geographical area of the country. It demonstrates that tribal districts are generally rich in forest cover.

Forest and tribals are very closely related. The age-old knowledge of tribals regarding forestry can be used in the development of forests. Rather than treating tribals as minor forest produce collectors they should be made growers of minor forest produce and encouraged to participate in conservation.

Based on the forest conservation policy the following steps were initiated:

Social Forestry

Social forestry means the management and protection of forests and afforestation on barren lands with the purpose of helping in the environmental, social and rural development.

The National Commission on Agriculture (1976) has classified social forestry into three categories. These are Urban forestry, Rural forestry and Farm forestry.

Urban forestry pertains to the raising and management of trees on public and privately owned lands in and around urban centres such as green belts, parks, roadside avenues, industrial and commercial green belts, etc.

Rural forestry lays emphasis on promotion of agro-forestry and community-forestry.

Agro-forestry is the raising of trees and agriculture crops on the same land inclusive of the waste patches. It combines forestry with agriculture, thus, altering the simultaneous production of food, fodder, fuel, timber and fruit. Community forestry involves the raising of trees on public or community land such as the village pasture and temple land, roadside, canal bank, strips along railway lines, and schools etc. Community forestry programme aims at providing benefits to the community as a whole. Community forestry provides a means under which the people of landless classes can associate themselves in tree-raising and thus, get those benefits which otherwise are restricted for landowners.

Farm Forestry

Farm forestry is a term applied to the process under which farmers grow trees for commercial and non-commercial purposes on their farm lands.

Forest departments of various states distribute seedlings of trees free of cost to small and medium farmers. Several lands such as the margins of agricultural fields, grasslands and pastures, land around homes and cow sheds may be used for raising trees under non-commercial farm forestry.

Wildlife

You would have visited a zoo and may have seen animals and birds in captivity. Wildlife of India is a great natural heritage. It is estimated that about 4-5 per cent of all known plant and animal species on the earth are found in India. The main reason for this remarkable diversity of life forms is the great diversity of the ecosystem which this country has preserved and supported through the ages. Over the years, their habitat has been disturbed by human activities and as a result, their numbers have dwindled significantly. There are certain species that are at the brink of extinction.

Some of the important reasons of the declining of wildlife are as follows:

(i) Industrial and technological advancement brought about a rapid increase in the exploitation of forest resources.
(ii) More and more lands were cleared for agriculture, human settlement, roads, mining, reservoirs, etc.
(iii) Pressure on forests mounted due to lopping for fodder and fuelwood and removal of small timber by the local people.
(iv) Grazing by domestic cattle caused an adverse effect on wildlife and its habitat.
(v) Hunting was taken up as a sport by the elite and hundreds of wild animals were killed in a single hunt. Now commercial poaching is rampant.
(vi) Incidence of forest fire.

It is being felt that conservation of wildlife is of great significance to the national as well as the world heritage along with the promotion of ecotourism. What steps have been initiated by the government in this direction?

Wildlife Conservation in India

The protection of wildlife has a long tradition in India. Many stories of *Panchtantra* and *Jungle Books*, etc. have stood the test of time relating to the love for wildlife. These have a profound impact on young minds.

In 1972, a comprehensive Wildlife Act was enacted, which provides the main legal framework for conservation and protection of wildlife in India. The two main objectives of the Act are; to provide protection to the endangered species listed in the schedule of the Act and to provide legal support to the conservation areas of the country classified as National parks, sanctuaries and closed areas. This Act has been comprehensively amended in 1991, making punishments more stringent and has also made provisions for the protection of specified plant species and conservation of endangered species of wild animals.

There are 92 National parks and 492 wildlife sanctuaries covering an area of 15.67 million hectares in the country.

Wildlife conservation has a very large ambit with unbounded potential for the well-being of humankind. However, this can be achieved only when every individual understands its significance and contributes his bit.

For the purpose of effective conservation of flora and fauna, special steps have been initiated by the Government of India in collaboration with UNESCO's 'Man and Biosphere Programme'.

Special schemes like Project Tiger (1973) and Project Elephant (1992) have been launched to conserve these species and their habitat in a sustainable manner.

Project Tiger has been implemented since 1973. The main objective of the scheme is to ensure maintenance of viable population of tigers in India for scientific, aesthetic, cultural and ecological values, and to preserve areas of biological importance as natural heritage for the benefit, education and enjoyment of the people. Initially, the Project Tiger was launched in nine tiger reserves, covering an area of 16,339 sq. km, which has now increased to 27 tiger reserves, encompassing 37,761sq. km of tiger habitats distributed in 17 states. The tiger population in the country has registered an increase from 1,827 in 1972 to 3,642 in 2001-2002.

Project Elephant was launched in 1992 to assist states having free ranging population of wild elephants. It was aimed at ensuring long-term survival of identified viable population of elephants in their natural habitat. The project is being implemented in 13 states.

Figure 5.7 : Elephants in their Natural Habitat

Apart from this, some other projects such as Crocodile Breeding Project, Project Hangul and conservation of Himalayan Musk deer have also been launched by the Government of India.

Biosphere Reserves

A Biosphere Reserve is a unique and representative ecosystem of terrestrial and coastal areas which are internationally recognised within the framework of UNESCO's Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme. The Biosphere Reserve aims at achieving the three objectives as depicted in Figure 5.8.

There are 14 Biosphere Reserves in India (Table 5.1, Figure 5.9). Four Biosphere Reserves, namely (i) Nilgiri; (ii) Nanda Devi;

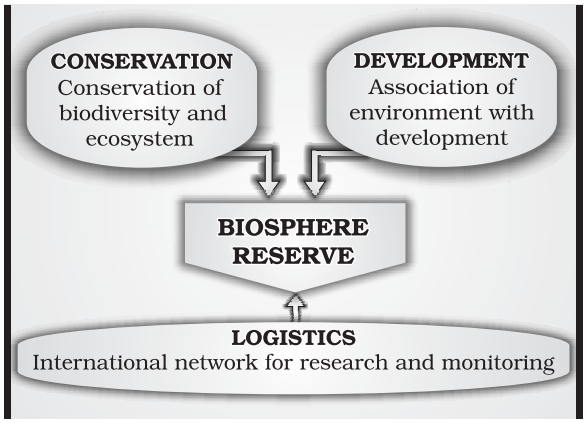


Figure 5.8 : Objectives of a Biosphere Reserve

Table 5.1 : List of Biosphere Reserves

Sl. No.	*Name of the Biosphere Reserve*	*Total Geographical Area (km^2)*	*Location (States)*
1.	* Nilgiri	5,520	Part of Wynad, Nagarhole, Bandipur and Mudumalai, Nilambur, Silent Valley and Siruvani Hills (Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka)
2.	* Nanda Devi	2,236.74	Part of Chamoli, Pithoragarh and Almora districts (Uttar Pradesh) and part of Garo Hills (Meghalaya)
3.	Nokrek	820	Part of Garo Hills (Meghalaya)
4.	Manas	2,837	Part of Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Barpeta, Nalbari, Kamrup and Darrang districts (Assam)
5.	* Sunderbans	9,630	Part of delta of Ganges and Brahmaputra river system (West Bengal)
6.	* Gulf of Mannar	10,500	Indian part of Gulf of Mannar between India and Sri Lanka (Tamil Nadu)
7.	Great Nicobar	885	Southernmost islands of the Andaman and Nicobar (A & N Islands)
8.	Similipal	4,374	Part of Mayurbhanj district (Orissa)
9.	Dibru-Saikhowa	765	Part of Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts (Assam)
10.	Dihang Dibang	5,111.5	Part of Siang and Debang valley in Arunachal Pradesh
11.	Kanchenjunga	2,619.92	Parts of North and West Sikkim
12.	Pachmari	4,926.28	Parts of Betul, Hoshangabad and Chindwara districts of Madhya Pradesh
13.	Agasthyamalai	1,701	Agasthyamalai Hills in Kerala
14.	Achanakmar- Amarkantak	3,835.51	Parts of Anupur and Dindori district of MP and parts of Bilaspur district of Chhattisgarh

* have been recognised by the UNESCO on World Network of Biosphere Reserves

Source : Annual Report (2004-05), Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India

Figure 5.9 : India : Biosphere Reserves

(iii) Sunderbans; and (iv) Gulf of Mannar have been recognised by the UNESCO on World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve

The Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve (NBR), the first of the fourteen biosphere reserves of India, was established in September 1986. It embraces the sanctuary complex of Wyanad, Nagarhole, Bandipur and Mudumalai, the entire forested hill slopes of Nilambur, the Upper Nilgiri plateau, Silent Valley and the Siruvani hills. The total area of the biosphere reserve is around 5,520 sq. km.

The Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve possesses different habitat types, unspoilt areas of natural vegetation types with several dry scrubs, dry and moist deciduous, semi-evergreen and wet evergreen forests, evergreen *sholas*, grasslands and swamps. It includes the largest known population of two endangered animal species, namely the Nilgiri Tahr and the Lion-tailed macaque. The largest south Indian population of elephant, tiger, gaur, *sambar* and *chital* as well as a good number of endemic and endangered plants are also found in this reserve. The habitat of a number of tribal groups remarkable for their traditional modes of harmonious use of the environment are also found here.

The topography of the NBR is extremely varied, ranging from an altitude of 250 m to 2,650 m. About 80 per cent of the flowering plants reported from the Western Ghats occur in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve.

Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve

The Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve situated in Uttaranchal includes parts of Chamoli, Almora, Pithoragarh and Bageshwar districts.

The major forest types of the reserve are temperate. A few important species are silver weed and orchids like latifolie and rhododendron. The biosphere reserve has a rich fauna, for example the snow leopard, black bear, brown bear, musk deer, snow-cock, golden eagle and black eagle.

Major threats to the ecosystem are the collection of endangered plants for medicinal use, forest fires and poaching.

Sunderbans Biosphere Reserve

It is located in the swampy delta of the river Ganga in West Bengal. It extends over a vast area of 9,630 sq. km and consists of mangrove forests, swamps and forested islands. Sunderbans is the home of nearly 200 Royal Bengal tigers.

The tangled mass of roots of mangrove trees provide safe homes for a large number of species, from fish to shrimp. More than 170 birds species are known to inhabit these mangrove forests.

Adapting itself to the saline and fresh water environment, the tigers at the park are good swimmers, and they hunt scarce preys such as *chital* deer, barking deer, wild pig and even macaques. In the Sunderbans, the mangrove forests are characterised by Heritiera fomes, a species valued for its timber.

Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve

The Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve covers an area of 105,000 hectares on the southeast coast of India. It is one of the world's richest regions from a marine biodiversity perspective. The biosphere reserve comprises 21 islands with estuaries, beaches, forests of the nearshore environment, sea grasses, coral reefs, salt marshes and mangroves. Among the Gulf's 3,600 plant and animal species are the globally endangered sea cow (Dugong dugon) and six mangrove species, endemic to Peninsular India.

EXERCISES

1. Choose the right answer from the four alternatives given below.
   (i) Sandalwood is an example of:
   (a) Evergreen forest
   (b) Deciduous forest
   (c) Deltaic forest
   (d) Thorny forest

(ii) Which one of the following was the purpose of Project Tiger?

(a) to kill tigers (c) to protect tigers from illegal hunting

(b) to put tigers in the Zoo (d) to make films on tigers

(iii) In which one of the following states is the Nandadevi Biosphere reserve situated?

(a) Bihar (c) Uttaranchal

(b) Uttar Pradesh (d) Orissa

(iv) How many of the following numbers of Biosphere reserves are recognised by the IUCN?

(a) One (c) Three

(b) Two (d) Four

(v) Which one of the following proportion of area of the country was targeted to be under forest in Forest Policy of India?

(a) 33 (c) 55

(b) 44 (d) 22

2. Answer the following questions in about 30 words.

(i) What is natural vegetation? Under what climatic conditions are tropical evergreen forests develop?

(ii) What do you understand by social forestry?

(iii) Define Biosphere reserves?

(iv) What is the difference between forest area and forest cover?

3. Answer the following questions in not more than 150 words.

(i) What steps have been taken up to conserve forests?

(ii) How can people's participation be effective in conserving forests and wildlife?

Project/Activity

1. On the outline map of India, mark and label the following.

(i) Areas having Mangrove forests.

(ii) Biosphere reserves of Nanda Devi, Sunderbans, Gulf of Mannar and Nilgiri.

(iii) Mark the location of Forest Survey of India Head Quarter.

2. List the trees, bush and shrub species found around your school. Write their local names and their uses.

UNIT VI

LIFE ON THE EARTH

This unit deals with

- *Biosphere — importance of plants and other organisms; ecosystems, bio-geo chemical cycle and ecological balance; biodiversity and conservation*

CHAPTER

15

LIFE ON THE EARTH

By now you might have realised that all units of this book have acquainted you with the three major realms of the environment, that is, the lithosphere, the atmosphere and the hydrosphere. You know that living organisms of the earth, constituting the *biosphere,* interact with other environmental realms. The biosphere includes all the living components of the earth. It consists of all plants and animals, including all the micro-organisms that live on the planet earth and their interactions with the surrounding environment. Most of the organisms exist on the lithosphere and/or the hydrosphere as well as in the atmosphere. There are also many organisms that move freely from one realm to the other.

> Life on the earth is found almost everywhere. Living organisms are found from the poles to the equator, from the bottom of the sea to several km in the air, from freezing waters to dry valleys, from under the sea to underground water lying below the earth's surface.

The biosphere and its components are very significant elements of the environment. These elements interact with other components of the natural landscape such as land, water and soil. They are also influenced by the atmospheric elements such as the temperature, rainfall, moisture and sunlight. The interactions of biosphere with land, air and water are important to the growth, development and evolution of the organism.

ECOLOGY

You have been reading about ecological and environmental problems in newspapers and magazines. Have you ever thought what ecology is? The environment as you know, is made up of abiotic and biotic components. It would be interesting to understand how the diversity of life-forms is maintained to bring a kind of balance. This balance is maintained in a particular proportion so that a healthy interaction between the biotic and the abiotic components goes on.

The interactions of a particular group of organisms with abiotic factors within a particular habitat resulting in clearly defined energy flows and material cycles on land, water and air, are called *ecological systems*.

> The term *ecology* is derived from the Greek word *'oikos'* meaning 'house', combined with the word *'logy'* meaning the 'science of' or 'the study of'. Literally, ecology is the study of the earth as a 'household', of plants, human beings, animals and micro-organisms. They all live together as interdependent components. A German zoologist *Ernst Haeckel*, who used the term as '*oekologie*' in 1869, became the first person to use the term 'ecology'. The study of interactions between life forms (biotic) and the physical environment (abiotic) is the science of ecology. Hence, *ecology can be defined as a scientific study of the interactions of organisms with their physical environment and with each other.*

A *habitat* in the ecological sense is the totality of the physical and chemical factors that constitute the general environment. A system consisting of biotic and abiotic components is known as ecosystem. All these components in ecosystem are inter related and interact with each other. Different types of ecosystems exist with varying ranges of environmental conditions where various plants and animal species have got adapted through evolution. This phenomenon is known as *ecological adaptation*.

Types of Ecosystems

Ecosystems are of two major types: *terrestrial* and *aquatic*. Terrestrial ecosystem can be further be classified into *'biomes'*. *A biome* is a plant and animal community that covers a large geographical area. The boundaries of different biomes on land are determined mainly by climate. Therefore, a biome can be defined as the total assemblage of plant and animal species interacting within specific conditions. These include rainfall, temperature, humidity and soil conditions. Some of the major biomes of the world are: *forest, grassland, desert and tundra biomes*. Aquatic ecosystems can be classed as marine and freshwater ecosystems. Marine ecosystem includes the oceans, coastal estuaries and coral reefs. Freshwater ecosystem includes lakes, ponds, streams, marshes and bogs.

Structure and Functions of Ecosystems

The structure of an ecosystem involves a description of the available plant and animal species. From a structural point of view, all ecosystems consist of abiotic and biotic factors. *Abiotic factors* include rainfall, temperature, sunlight, atmospheric humidity, soil conditions, inorganic substances (carbon dioxide, water, nitrogen, calcium, phosphorus, potassium, etc.). *Biotic factors* include the producers, (primary, secondary, tertiary) the consumers and the decomposers. The *producers* include all the green plants, which manufacture their own food through photosynthesis. The *primary consumers* include herbivorous animals like deer, goats, mice and all plant-eating animals. The *carnivores* include all the flesh-eating animals like snakes, tigers and lions. Certain carnivores that feed also on carnivores are known as top carnivores like hawks and mongooses. *Decomposers* are those that feed on dead organisms (for example, scavengers like vultures and crows), and further breaking down of the dead matter by other decomposing agents like bacteria and various micro-organisms.

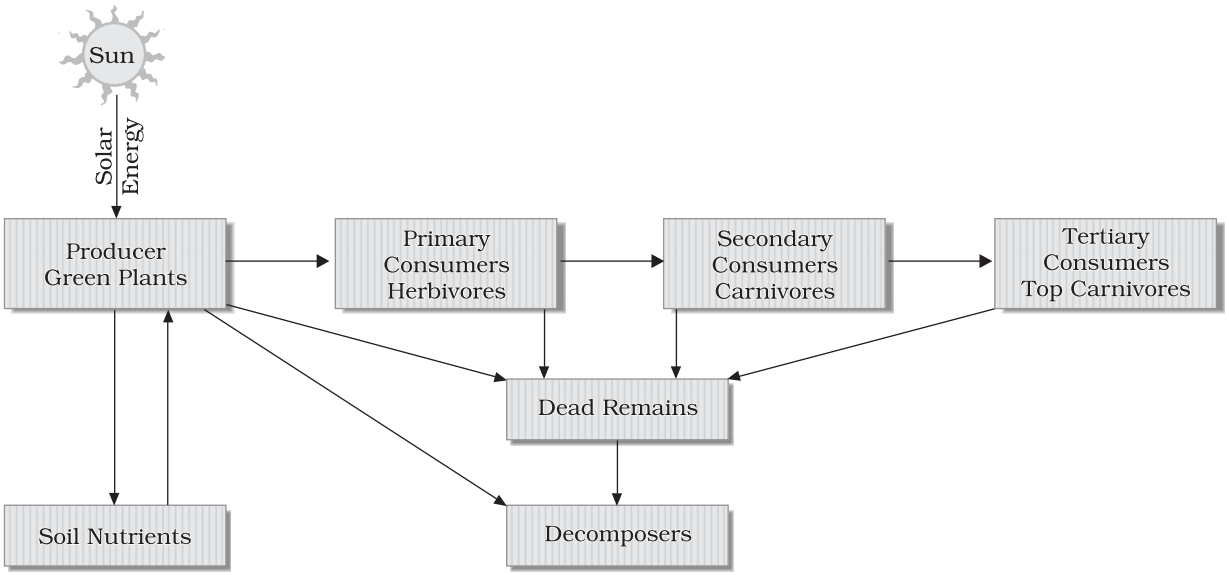


Figure 15.1 : Structure and functions of ecosystems

The producers are consumed by the primary consumers whereas the primary consumers are, in turn, being eaten by the secondary consumers. Further, the secondary consumers are consumed by the tertiary consumers. The decomposers feed on the dead at each and every level. They change them into various substances such as nutrients, organic and inorganic salts essential for soil fertility. Organisms of an ecosystem are linked together through a foodchain (Figure 15.1). For example, a plant eating beetle feeding on a paddy stalk is eaten by a frog, which is, in turn, eaten by a snake, which is then consumed by a hawk. This sequence of eating and being eaten and the resultant transfer of energy from one level to another is known as the *food-chain*. Transfer of energy that occurs during the process of a foodchain from one level to another is known as *flow of energy*. However, food-chains are not isolated from one another. For example, a mouse feeding on grain may be eaten by different secondary consumers (carnivores) and these carnivores may be eaten by other different tertiary consumers (top carnivores). In such situations, each of the carnivores may consume more than one type of prey. As a result, the food- chains get interlocked with one another. This inter-connecting network of species is known as *food web*. Generally, two types of food-chains are recognised: *grazing food-chain* and *detritus food-chain*. In a grazing food-chain, the first level starts with plants as producers and ends with carnivores as consumers as the last level, with the herbivores being at the intermediate level. There is a loss of energy at each level which may be through respiration, excretion or decomposition. The levels involved in a food-chain range between three to five and energy is lost at each level. A detritus food-chain is based on autotrophs energy capture initiated by grazing animals and involves the decomposition or breaking down of organic wastes and dead matter derived from the grazing food-chain.

Types of Biomes

In the earlier paragraphs, you have learnt the meaning of the term 'biome'. Let us now try to identify the major biomes of the world. There are five major biomes — forest, desert, grassland, aquatic and altitudinal biomes. Some features of these biomes are given in Table 15.1.

Biogeochemical Cycles

The sun is the basic source of energy on which all life depends. This energy initiates life processes in the biosphere through photosynthesis, the main source of food and energy for green plants. During photosynthesis, carbon dioxide is converted into organic compounds and oxygen. Out of the total solar insolation that reaches the earth's surface, only a very small fraction (0.1 per cent) is fixed in photosynthesis. More than half is used for plant respiration and the remaining part is temporarily stored or is shifted to other portions of the plant.

Life on earth consists of a great variety of living organisms. These living organisms exist and survive in a diversity of associations. Such survival involves the presence of systemic flows such as flows of energy, water and nutrients. These flows show variations in different parts of the world, in different seasons of the year and under varying local circumstances. Studies have shown that for the last one billion years, the atmosphere and hydrosphere have been composed of approximately the same balance of chemical components. This balance of the chemical elements is maintained by a cyclic passage through the tissues of plants and animals. The cycle starts by absorbing the chemical elements by the organism and is returned to the air, water and soil through decomposition. These cycles are largely energised by solar insolation. These cyclic movements of chemical elements of the biosphere between the organism and the environment are referred to as *biogeochemical cycles*. *Bio* refers to living organisms and *geo* to rocks, soil, air and water of the earth.

There are two types of biogeochemical cycles : the *gaseous* and the *sedimentary* cycle. In the gaseous cycle, the main reservoir of nutrients is the atmosphere and the ocean. In the sedimentary cycle, the main reservoir is the soil and the sedimentary and other rocks of the earth's crust.

The Water Cycle

All living organisms, the atmosphere and the lithosphere maintain between them a

Table 15.1 : World Biomes

Biomes	*Subtypes*	*Regions*	*Climatic Characteristics*	*Soil*	*Flora and Fauna*
Forest	A. Tropical 1. Equitorial 2. Deciduous B. Temperate C. Boreal	A1. 10° N-S A2. 10° - 25° N-S B. Eastern North America, N.E. Asia, Western and Central Europe C. Broad belt of Eurasia and North America, parts of Siberia, Alaska, Canada and Scandinavia	A1. Temp. 20-25°C, evenly distributed A2. Temp. 25-30°C, Rainfall, ave. ann. 1,000mm, seasonal B. Temp. 20-30° C, Rainfall evenly distributed 750-1,500mm, Well-defined seasons and distinct winter. C. Short moist moderately warm summers and long cold dry winter; very low temperatures. Precipitation mostly snowfall 400 -1,000mm	A1. Acidic, poor in nutrients A2. Rich in nutrients B. Fertile, en-riched with decaying litter C. Acidic and poor in nutrients, thin soil cover	A1. Multi-layered canopy tall and large trees A2. Less dense, trees of medium height; many varieties co-exist. Insects, bats, birds and mammals are common species in both B. Moderately dense broad leaved trees. With less diversity of plant species. Oack, Beach, Maple etc. are some common species. Squirrels, rabbits, skunks, birds, black bears, mountain lions etc. C. Evergreen conifers like pine, fur and spruce etc. Wood peckers, hawks, bears, wolves, deer, hares and bats are common animals
Desert	A. Hot and Dry desert B. Semi arid desert C. Coastal desert D. Cold desert	A. Sahara, Kalahari, Marusthali, Rub-el-Khali B. Marginal areas of hot deserts C. Atacama D. Tundra climatic regions	A. Temp. 20 - 45°C. B. 21 - 38°C. C. 15 - 35°C. D. 2 - 25°C A-D Rainfall is less than 50 mm	Rich in nutrients with little or no organic matter	A-C. Scanty vegetation; few large mammals, insects, reptiles and birds D. Rabbits, rats, antelopes and ground squirrels
Grassland	A. Tropical Savannah B. Temperate Steppe	A. Large areas of Africa, Australia, South America and India B. Parts of Eurasia and North America	A. Warm hot climates, Rainfall 500-1,250 mm B. Hot summers and cold winter. Rainfall 500 - 900 mm	A. Porous with thin layer of humus. B. Thin flocculated soil, rich in bases	A. Grasses; trees and large shrubs absent; giraffes zebras, buffalos, leopards, hyenas, elephants, mice, moles, snakes and worms etc., are common animals B. Grasses; occasional trees such as cottonwoods, oaks and willows; gazelles, zebras, rhin-

					oceros, wild horses, lions, varieties of birds, worms, snakes etc., are common animals
Aquatic	A. Freshwater B. Marine	A. Lakes, streams, rivers and wetlands B. Oceans, coral reefs, lagoons and estuaries	A-B Temperatures vary widely with cooler air temperatures and high humidity	A. Water, swamps and marshes B. Water, tidal swamps and marshes	Algal and other aquatic and marine plant communities with varieties of water dwelling animals
Altitudinal	———	Slopes of high mountain ranges like the Himalayas, the Andes and the Rockies	Temperature and precipitation vary depending upon latitudinal zone	Regolith over slopes	Deciduous to tundra vegetation varying according to altitude

circulation of water in solid, liquid or gaseous form referred to as the water or hydrologic cycle (Chapter 13 of this book).

The Carbon Cycle

Carbon is one of the basic elements of all living organisms. It forms the basic constituent of all the organic compounds. The biosphere contains over half a million carbon compounds in them. The carbon cycle is mainly the conversion of carbon dioxide. This conversion is initiated by the fixation of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere through *photosynthesis*. Such conversion results in the production of carbohydrate, glucose that may be converted to other organic compounds such as sucrose, starch, cellulose, etc. Here, some of the carbohydrates are utilised directly by the plant itself. During this process, more carbon dioxide is generated and is released through its leaves or roots during the day. The remaining carbohydrates not being utilised by the plant become part of the plant tissue. Plant tissues are either being eaten by the herbivorous animals or get decomposed by the micro-organisms. The herbivores convert some of the consumed carbohydrates into carbon dioxide for release into the air through respiration. The micro-organisms decompose the remaining carbohydrates after the animal dies. The carbohydrates that are decomposed by the micro-organisms then get oxidised into carbon dioxide and are returned to the atmosphere (Figure 15.2).

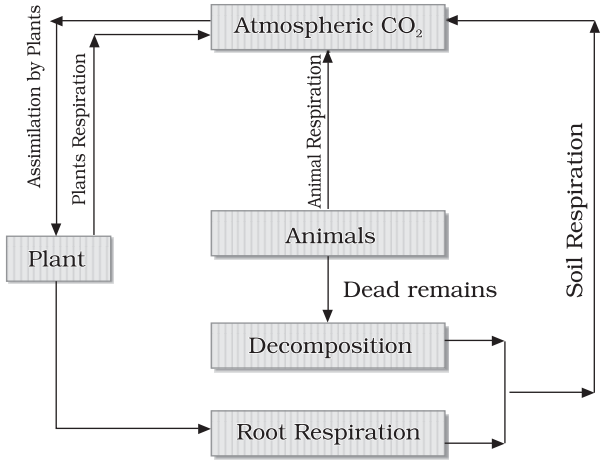


Figure 15.2 : Carbon Cycle

The Oxygen Cycle

Oxygen is the main by-product of photosynthesis. It is involved in the oxidation of carbohydrates with the release of energy, carbon dioxide and water. The cycling of oxygen is a highly complex process. Oxygen occurs in a number of chemical forms and combinations. It combines with nitrogen to form nitrates and with many other minerals and elements to form various oxides such as the iron oxide, aluminium oxide and others. Much of oxygen is produced from the decomposition of water molecules by sunlight

during photosynthesis and is released in the atmosphere through transpiration and respiration processes of plants.

The Nitrogen Cycle

Nitrogen is a major constituent of the atmosphere comprising about seventy-nine per cent of the atmospheric gases. It is also an essential constituent of different organic compounds such as the amino acids, nucleic acids, proteins, vitamins and pigments. Only a few types of organisms like certain species of soil bacteria and blue green algae are capable of utilising it directly in its gaseous form. Generally, nitrogen is usable only after it is fixed. Ninety per cent of fixed nitrogen is biological. The principal source of free nitrogen is the action of soil micro-organisms and associated plant roots on atmospheric nitrogen found in pore spaces of the soil. Nitrogen can also be fixed in the atmosphere by lightning and cosmic radiation. In the oceans, some marine animals can fix it. After atmospheric nitrogen has been fixed into an available form, green plants can assimilate it. Herbivorous animals feeding on plants, in turn, consume some of it. Dead plants and animals, excretion of nitrogenous wastes are converted into nitrites by the action of bacteria present in the soil. Some bacteria can even convert nitrites into nitrates that can be used again by green plants. There are still other types of bacteria capable of converting nitrates into free nitrogen, a process known as *denitrification* (Figure 15.3).

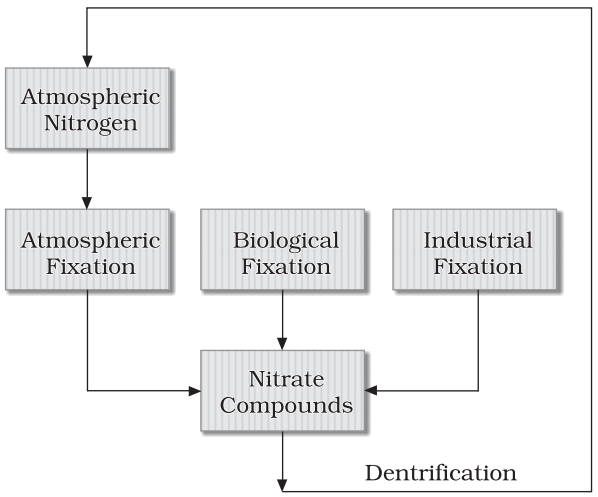


Figure 15.3 : Nitrogen Cycle

Other Mineral Cycles

Other than carbon, oxygen, nitrogen and hydrogen being the principal geochemical components of the biosphere, many other minerals also occur as critical nutrients for plant and animal life. These mineral elements required by living organisms are obtained initially from inorganic sources such as phosphorus, sulphur, calcium and potassium. They usually occur as salts dissolved in soil water or lakes, streams and seas. Mineral salts come directly from the earth's crust by weathering where the soluble salts enter the water cycle, eventually reaching the sea. Other salts are returned to the earth's surface through sedimentation, and after weathering, they again enter the cycle. All living organisms fulfill their mineral requirements from mineral solutions in their environments. Other animals receive their mineral needs from the plants and animals they consume. After the death of living organisms, the minerals are returned to the soil and water through decomposition and flow.

Ecological Balance

Ecological balance is a state of dynamic equilibrium within a community of organisms in a habitat or ecosystem. It can happen when the diversity of the living organisms remains relatively stable. Gradual changes do take place but that happens only through natural succession. It can also be explained as a stable balance in the numbers of each species in an ecosystem. This occurs through competition and cooperation between different organisms where population remains stable. This balance is brought about by the fact that certain species compete with one another determined by the environment in which they grow. This balance is also attained by the fact that some species depend on others for their food and sustenance. Such accounts are encountered in vast grasslands where the herbivorous animals (deer, zebras, buffaloes, etc.) are found in plenty. On the other hand, the carnivorous animals (tigers, lions, etc.) that are not usually in large numbers, hunt and feed on the herbivores, thereby controlling their population. In the plants, any disturbance in the native forests such as clearing the forest for shifting cultivation usually brings about a

change in the species distribution. This change is due to competition where the secondary forest species such as grasses, bamboos or pines overtakes the native species changing the original forest structure. This is called *succession*.

Ecological balance may be disturbed due to the introduction of new species, natural hazards or human causes. Human interference has affected the balance of plant communities leading to disturbances in the ecosystems. Such disturbances bring about numerous secondary successions. Human pressure on the earth's resources has put a heavy toll on the ecosystem. This has destroyed its originality and has caused adverse effects to the general environment. Ecological imbalances have brought many natural calamities like floods, landslides, diseases, erratic climatic occurrences, etc.

There is a very close relationship between the plant and animal communities within particular habitats. Diversity of life in a particular area can be employed as an indicator of the habitat factor. Proper knowledge and understanding of such factors provide a strong base for protecting and conserving the ecosystems.

EXERCISES

1. Multiple choice questions.

   (i) Which one of the following is included in biosphere?

   (a) only plants (c) only animals

   (b) all living and non-living organisms (d) all living organisms

   (ii) Tropical grasslands are also known as :

   (a) the prairies (c) the steppes

   (b) the savannas (d) none of the above

   (iii) Oxygen combines with iron found in the rocks to form :

   (a) iron carbonate (c) iron oxides

   (b) iron nitrites (d) iron sulphate

   (iv) During photosynthesis, carbon dioxide combines with water in the presence of sunlight to form :

   (a) proteins (c) carbohydrates

   (b) amino acids (d) vitamins

2. Answer the following questions in about 30 words.

   (i) What do you understand by the term 'ecology'?

   (ii) What is an ecological system? Identify the major types of ecosystems in the world.

   (iii) What is a food-chain? Give one example of a grazing food-chain identifying the various levels.

   (iv) What do you understand by the term 'food web'? Give examples.

   (v) What is a biome?

3. Answer the following questions in about 150 words.

   (i) What are bio-geochemical cycles? Explain how nitrogen is fixed in the atmosphere.

   (ii) What is an ecological balance? Discuss the important measures needed to prevent ecological imbalances.

Project Work

   (i) Show the distribution of the different biomes on the outline map of the world with a note highlighting the important characteristics of each biome.

   (ii) Make a note of trees, shrubs and perennial plants in your school campus and devote half a day to observe the types of birds which come to the garden. Can you describe the diversity of birds?

CHAPTER

16

BIODIVERSITY AND CONSERVATION

You have already learnt about the geomorphic processes particularly weathering and depth of weathering mantle in different climatic zones. See the Figure 6.2 in Chapter 6 in order to recapitulate. You should know that this weathering mantle is the basis for the diversity of vegetation and hence, the biodiversity. The basic cause for such weathering variations and resultant biodiversity is the input of solar energy and water. No wonder that the areas that are rich in these inputs are the areas of wide spectrum of biodiversity.

Biodiversity as we have today is the result of 2.5-3.5 billion years of evolution. Before the advent of humans, our earth supported more biodiversity than in any other period. Since, the emergence of humans, however, biodiversity has begun a rapid decline, with one species after another bearing the brunt of extinction due to overuse. The number of species globally vary from 2 million to 100 million, with 10 million being the best estimate. New species are regularly discovered most of which are yet to be classified (an estimate states that about 40 per cent of fresh water fishes from South America are not classified yet). Tropical forests are very rich in bio-diversity.

Biodiversity is a system in constant evolution, from a view point of species, as well as from view point of an individual organism. The average half-life of a species is estimated at between one and four million years, and 99 per cent of the species that have ever lived on the earth are today extinct. Biodiversity is not found evenly on the earth. It is consistently richer in the tropics. As one approaches the polar regions, one finds larger and larger populations of fewer and fewer species.

Biodiversity itself is a combination of two words, *Bio* (life) and *diversity* (variety). In simple terms, biodiversity is the number and variety of organisms found within a specified geographic region. It refers to the varieties of plants, animals and micro-organisms, the genes they contain and the ecosystems they form. It relates to the variability among living organisms on the earth, including the variability within and between the species and that within and between the ecosystems. Biodiversity is our living wealth. It is a result of hundreds of millions of years of evolutionary history.

Biodiversity can be discussed at three levels : (i) Genetic diversity; (ii) Species diversity; (iii) Ecosystem diversity.

Genetic Diversity

Genes are the basic building blocks of various life forms. Genetic biodiversity refers to the variation of genes within species. Groups of individual organisms having certain similarities in their physical characteristics are called *species*. Human beings genetically belong to the *homo sapiens* group and also differ in their characteristics such as height, colour, physical appearance, etc., considerably. This is due to genetic diversity. This genetic diversity is essential for a healthy breeding of population of species.

Species Diversity

This refers to the variety of species. It relates to the number of species in a defined area. The diversity of species can be measured through its richness, abundance and types. Some areas are more rich in species than others. Areas rich in species diversity are called *hotspots* of diversity (Figure 16.5).

Ecosystem Diversity

You have studied about the ecosystem in the earlier chapter. The broad differences between ecosystem types and the diversity of habitats and ecological processes occurring within each ecosystem type constitute the ecosystem diversity. The 'boundaries' of communities (associations of species) and ecosystems are not very rigidly defined. Thus, the demarcation of ecosystem boundaries is difficult and complex.

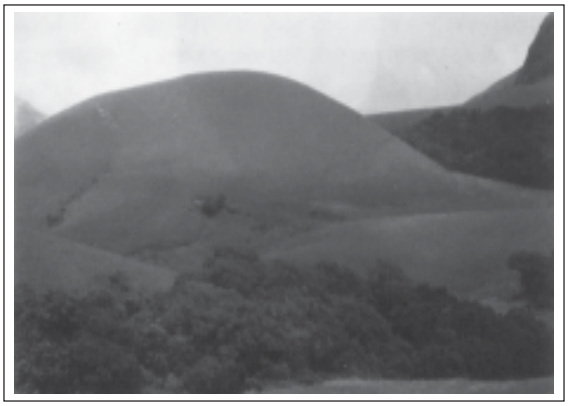


Figure 16.1 : Grasslands and sholas in Indira Gandhi National Park, Annamalai, Western Ghats — an example of ecosystem diversity

Importance of Biodiversity

Biodiversity has contributed in many ways to the development of human culture and, in turn, human communities have played a major role in shaping the diversity of nature at the genetic, species and ecological levels. Biodiversity plays the following roles: ecological, economic and scientific.

Ecological Role of Biodiversity

Species of many kinds perform some function or the other in an ecosystem. Nothing in an ecosystem evolves and sustains without any reason. That means, every organism, besides extracting its needs, also contributes something of useful to other organisms. Can you think of the way we, humans contribute to the sustenance of ecosystems. Species capture and store energy, produce and decompose organic materials, help to cycle water and nutrients throughout the ecosystem, fix atmospheric gases and help regulate the climate. These functions are important for ecosystem function and human survival. The more diverse an ecosystem, better are the chances for the species to survive through adversities and attacks, and consequently, is more productive. Hence, the loss of species would decrease the ability of the system to maintain itself. Just like a species with a high genetic diversity, an ecosystem with high biodiversity may have a greater chance of adapting to environmental change. In other words, the more the variety of species in an ecosystem, the more stable the ecosystem is likely to be.

Economic Role of Biodiversity

For all humans, biodiversity is an important resource in their day-to-day life. One important part of biodiversity is 'crop diversity', which is also called agro-biodiversity. Biodiversity is seen as a reservoir of resources to be drawn upon for the manufacture of food, pharmaceutical, and cosmetic products. This concept of biological resources is responsible for the deterioration of biodiversity. At the same time, it is also the origin of new conflicts dealing with rules of division and appropriation of natural resources. Some of the important economic commodities that biodiversity supplies to humankind are: food crops, livestock, forestry, fish, medicinal resources, etc.

Scientific Role of Biodiversity

Biodiversity is important because each species can give us some clue as to how life evolved and will continue to evolve. Biodiversity also helps in understanding how life functions and the role of each species in sustaining

ecosystems of which we are also a species. This fact must be drawn upon every one of us so that we live and let other species also live their lives.

It is our ethical responsibility to consider that each and every species along with us have an intrinsic right to exist. Hence, it is morally wrong to voluntarily cause the extinction of any species. The level of biodiversity is a good indicator of the state of our relationships with other living species. In fact, the concept of biodiversity is an integral part of many human cultures.

Loss of Biodiversity

Since the last few decades, growth in human population has increased the rate of consumption of natural resources. It has accelerated the loss of species and habitation in different parts of the world. Tropical regions which occupy only about one-fourth of the total area of the world, contain about three-fourth of the world human population. Over-exploitation of resources and deforestation have become rampant to fulfil the needs of large population. As these tropical rain forests contain 50 per cent of the species on the earth, destruction of natural habitats have proved disastrous for the entire biosphere.

Natural calamities such as earthquakes, floods, volcanic eruptions, forest fires, droughts, etc. cause damage to the flora and fauna of the earth, bringing change the biodiversity of respective affected regions. Pesticides and other pollutants such as hydrocarbons and toxic heavy metals destroy the weak and sensitive species. Species which are not the natural inhabitants of the local habitat but are introduced into the system, are called *exotic species*. There are many examples when a natural biotic community of the ecosystem suffered extensive damage because of the introduction of exotic species. During the last few decades, some animals like tigers, elephants, rhinoceros, crocodiles, minks and birds were hunted mercilessly by poachers for their horn, tusks, hides, etc. It has resulted in the rendering of certain types of organisms as endangered category.

The International Union of Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) has classified the threatened species of plants and animals into three categories for the purpose of their conservation.

Endangered Species

It includes those species which are in danger of extinction. The IUCN publishes information about endangered species world-wide as the *Red List* of threatened species.

Figure 16.2 : Red Panda — an endangered species

Figure 16.3 : Zenkeria Sebastinei — a critically endangered grass in Agasthiyamalai peak (India)

Vulnerable Species

This includes the species which are likely to be in danger of extinction in near future if the factors threatening to their extinction continue. Survival of these species is not assured as their population has reduced greatly.

Rare Species

Population of these species is very small in the world; they are confined to limited areas or thinly scattered over a wider area.

Figure 16.4 : Humbodtia decurrens Bedd — highly rare endemic tree of Southern Western Ghats (India)

Conservation of Biodiversity

Biodiversity is important for human existence. All forms of life are so closely interlinked that disturbance in one gives rise to imbalance in the others. If species of plants and animals become endangered, they cause degradation in the environment, which may threaten human being's own existence.

There is an urgent need to educate people to adopt environment-friendly practices and reorient their activities in such a way that our development is harmonious with other life forms and is sustainable. There is an increasing consciousness of the fact that such conservation with sustainable use is possible only with the involvement and cooperation of local communities and individuals. For this, the development of institutional structures at local levels is necessary. The critical problem is not merely the conservation of species nor the habitat but the continuation of process of conservation.

The Government of India along with 155 other nations have signed the Convention of Biodiversity at the Earth Summit held at Riode Janeiro, Brazil in June 1992. The world conservation strategy has suggested the following steps for biodiversity conservation:

(i) Efforts should be made to preserve the species that are endangered.
(ii) Prevention of extinction requires proper planning and management.
(iii) Varieties of food crops, forage plants, timber trees, livestock, animals and their wild relatives should be preserved;
(iv) Each country should identify habitats of wild relatives and ensure their protection.
(v) Habitats where species feed, breed, rest and nurse their young should be safeguarded and protected.
(vi) International trade in wild plants and animals be regulated.

To protect, preserve and propagate the variety of species within natural boundaries, the Government of India passed the *Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972*, under which national parks and sanctuaries were established and biosphere reserves declared. Details of these biosphere reserves are given in the book *India: Physical Environment* (NCERT, 2006).

There are some countries which are situated in the tropical region; they possess a large number of the world's species diversity. They are called *mega diversity centres*. There are 12 such countries, namely Mexico, Columbia, Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, Zaire, Madagascar, China, India, Malaysia, Indonesia and Australia in which these centres are located (Figure 16.5). In order to concentrate resources on those areas that are most vulnerable, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) has identified certain areas as biodiversity hotspots. Hotspots are defined according to their vegetation. Plants are important because these determine the primary productivity of an ecosystem. Most, but not all, of the hotspots rely on species-rich ecosystems for food, firewood, cropland, and income from timber. In Madagascar, for example, about 85 per cent of the plants and animals are not only found nowhere else in the world, but its people are also among the world's poorest and rely on slash and burn agriculture for subsistence farming. Other hotspots in wealthy countries are facing

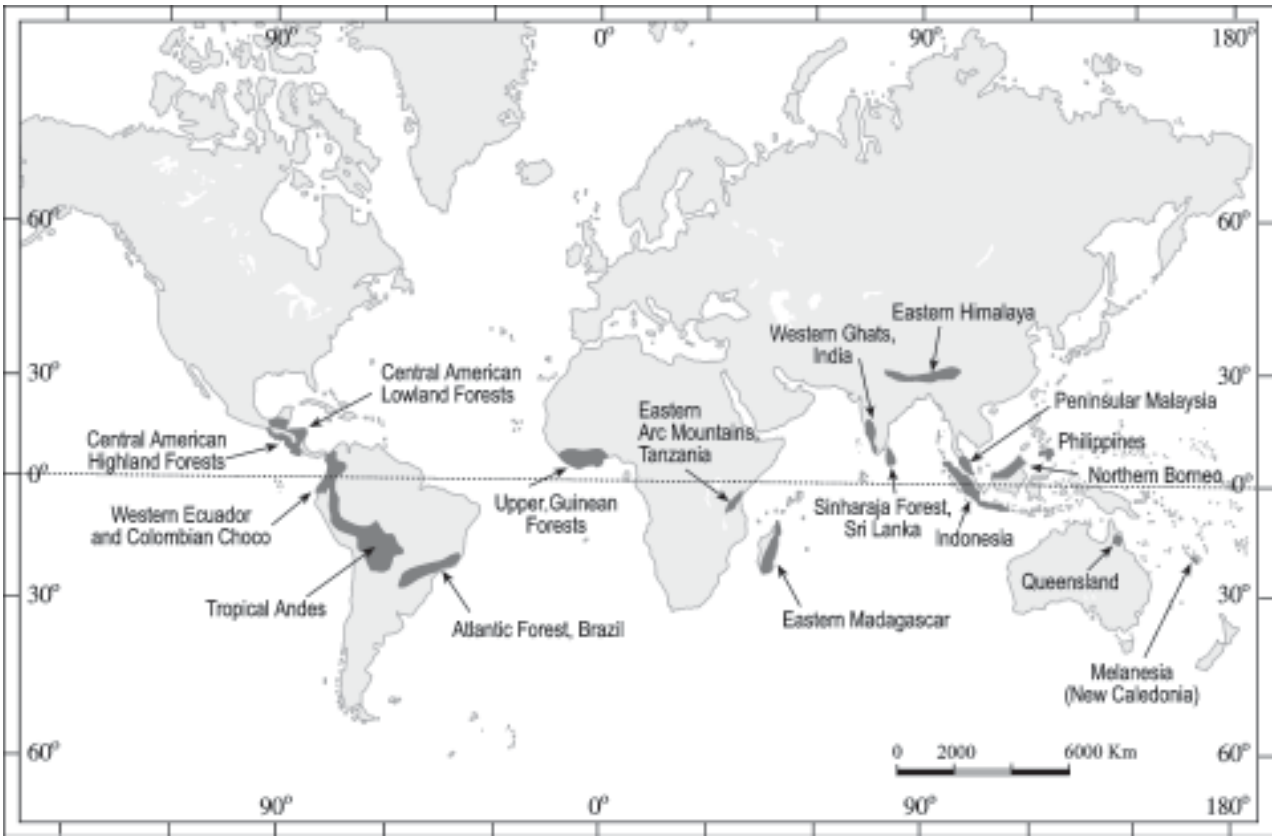


Figure 16.5 : Ecological 'hotspots' in the world

different types of pressures. The islands of Hawaii have many unique plants and animals that are threatened by introduced species and land development.

EXERCISES

1. Multiple choice questions.
   (i) Conservation of biodiversity is important for :
   (a) Animals (c) Plants
   (b) Animals and plants (d) All organisms
   (ii) Threatened species are those which :
   (a) threaten others
   (b) Lion and tiger
   (c) are abundant in number
   (d) are suffering from the danger of extinction
   (iii) National parks and sanctuaries are established for the purpose of :
   (a) Recreation (c) Pets
   (b) Hunting (d) Conservation

(iv) Biodiversity is richer in :

(a) Tropical Regions (c) Temperate Regions

(b) Polar Regions (d) Oceans

(v) In which one of the following countries, the 'Earth Summit' was held?

(a) the UK (c) Brazil

(b) Mexico (d) China

2. Answer the following questions in about 30 words.

(i) What is biodiversity?

(ii) What are the different levels of biodiversity?

(iii) What do you understand by 'hotspots'?

(iv) Discuss briefly the importance of animals to human kind.

(v) What do you understand by 'exotic species'?

3. Answer the following questions in about 150 words.

(i) What are the roles played by biodiversity in the shaping of nature?

(ii) What are the major factors that are responsible for the loss of biodiversity? What steps are needed to prevent them?

Project Work

Collect the names of national parks, sanctuaries and biosphere reserves of the state where your school is located and show their location on the map of India.