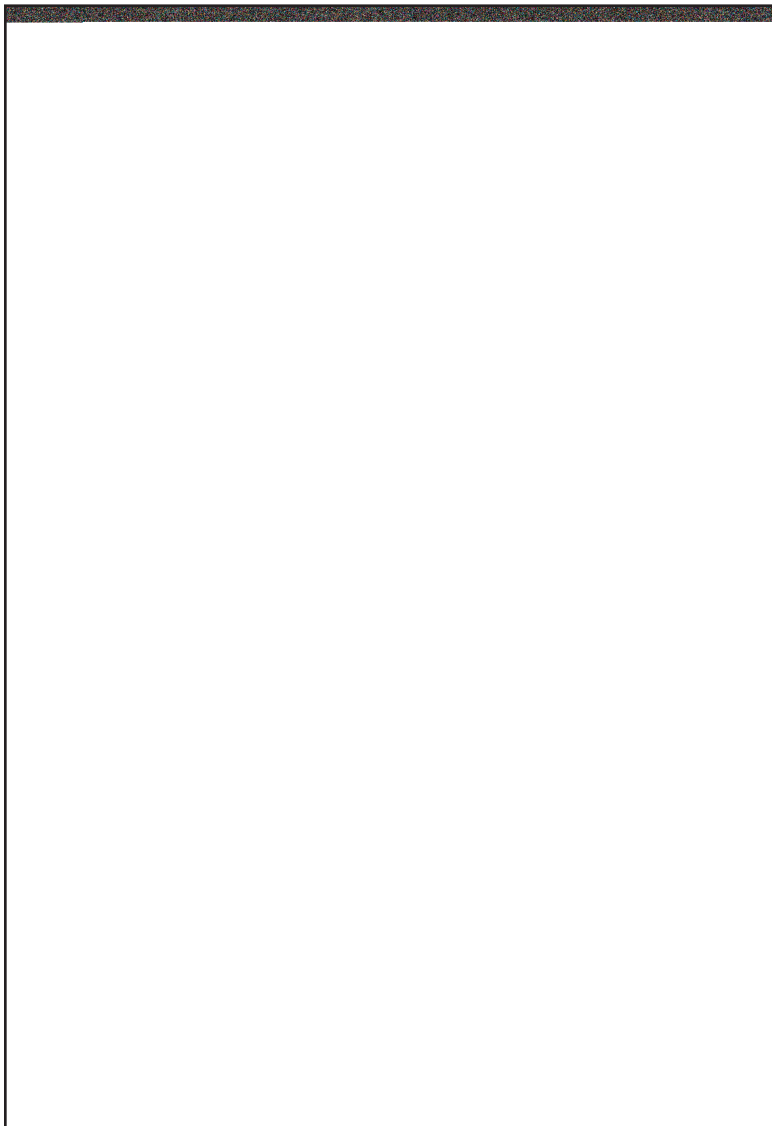


3

The Landscape of Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is an island located in the Indian Ocean with a land area about 65610 km². Within this land area, diverse landscapes can be identified. They are different from each other and consist of various physical and human features.



The main objective of this chapter is to study the regional landscapes of the areas of Hill Country, the Dry Zone, the Wet Zone, Jaffna Peninsula and the islands and the coastal belt including their unique features.

Fig. 3.1 - The diversity of the regional landscape of Sri Lanka

Landscape of The Hilly Region

In the lands located 300m above the mean sea level, a hill country landscape can be found. Such landscapes are mainly found in both the Central Hills and Sabaragamuwa Hills of Sri Lanka. When compared to the other landscapes, a complex physical landscape can be identified in these regions.

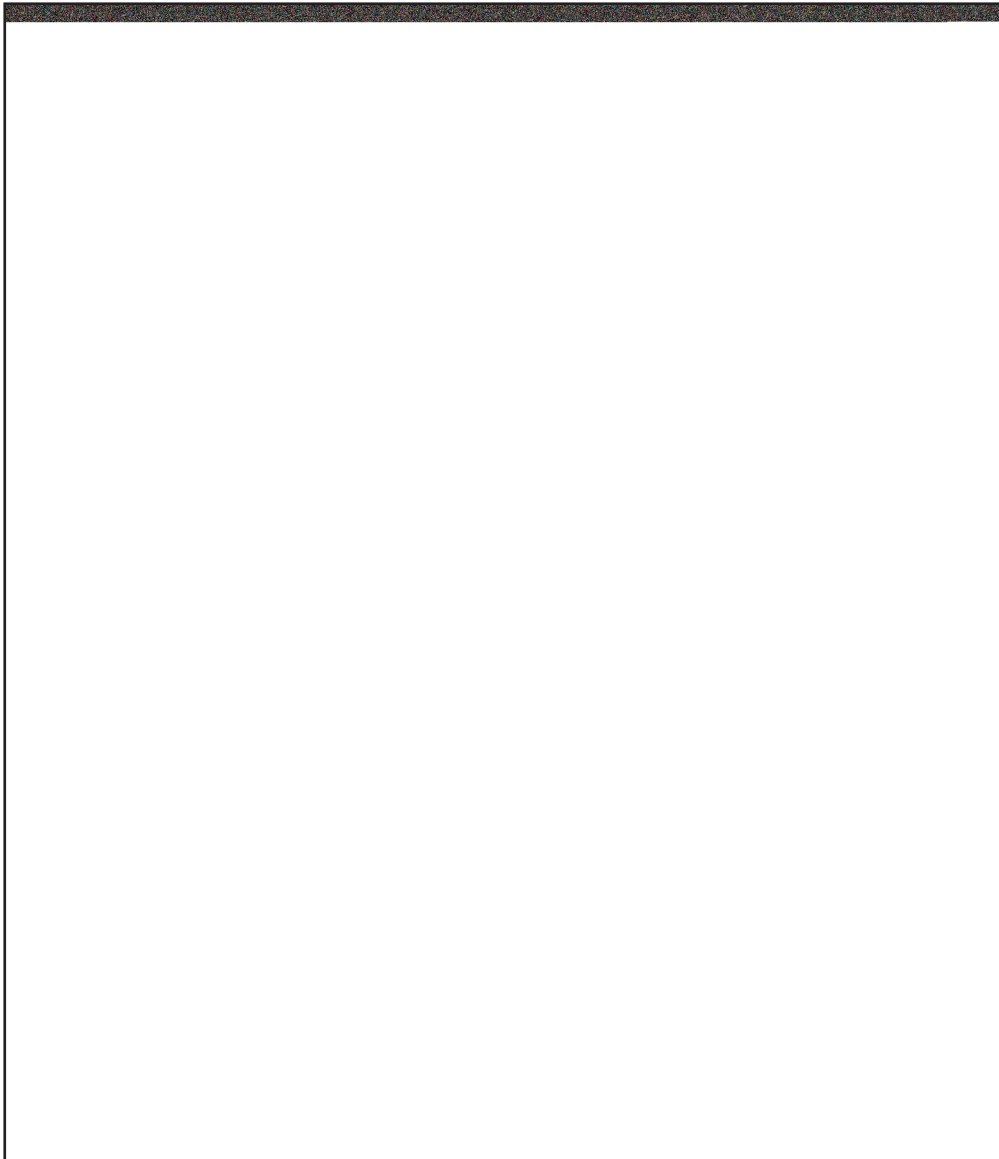


Fig. 3.2 - Hill Country landscape of Sri Lanka

A landscape providing physical and mental relaxation

Activity

1. Observe figure 3.2 and complete the following table

Mountain Ranges	Waterfalls	Plateaus

- Mountain ranges and plateaus, rivers flowing through valleys, waterfalls and gaps/ passes are the main physical features.
- Consists of a vegetation cover which is compatible with relief and climate.
- The landscape linked to tea cultivation is unique to the Hill Country. Tea factories, large groups of workers, workers' houses and bungalows, developed road systems as well as the cultural inheritance of the estate workers are some of the important features.
- The network of roads that runs with many bends as a result of the relief pattern and houses built on the slopes are specific to the landscape of the Hill Country.
- Vegetable, fruit and flower cultivation done on a commercial basis and livestock farms associated with grasslands are found.
- Both local and foreign tourists like to visit The Hill Country. Hence, tourist industry and features connected to it such as hotels, tourist bungalows and land areas allocated for recreational activities including sports activities are prominent features of this landscape.

Activities

1. Name significant physical features of the Hill Country.
2. List out human activities found in the regions with a hilly landscape.
3. Draw a landscape of hill country.
4. Explain how the physical features have influenced the human landscape of the hill country.
5. On a map of Central Hills of Sri Lanka, mark and name two mountain ranges, plateaus, waterfalls and gaps.

Landscape of the Dry Zone

This region could be introduced as the area where the Sri Lankan civilization began. Mainly, the dry zone landscape can be seen in North, North central, East and Southeast regions of the country. The base of the landscape of Dry Zone is set on the factors like severe drought, high temperature, uncertain and low rainfall and high evaporation. A human landscape that is compatible to the Dry Zone environment too can be seen in this landscape.

- Plains and residual hills scattered about, rivers that run dry during a particular period of the year, trees with tall trunks and hard heartwood are the well known features of the physical landscape of the Dry Zone.
- Grass, shrubs with thorny bushes that grow in arid climate that prevails at Mannar and Puttalam in the Northwestern region and Hambantota area in the Southeastern region of Sri Lanka too are specific features of this landscape.
- Sigiriya, Dambulla, Ritigala, Kataragama etc. are several residual hills located in this region. According to the location and shape Sigiriya has been a fortress since the ancient times.
- The tanks built by blocking the rivers that flow through the small ridges are also prominent in this landscape. Most of them are fed by rain water and the water of river Mahaweli. A large land area of the Dry Zone is utilized for paddy cultivation under irrigation. Rice mills and industries producing rice flour products have been established associated with the paddy cultivation.
- Planned farming settlements built with all the facilities for the people who were settled in farming colonies to cultivate the dry lands and paddy lands using the water of river Mahaweli are seen in the landscape of the Dry Zone.
- Chena cultivation based on rain water is also a main feature of this zone. Chena with *Danduweta* (fence made of sticks), small hut and lands with crop cultivated on rain water is a gradually changing feature in the landscape of the Dry Zone.

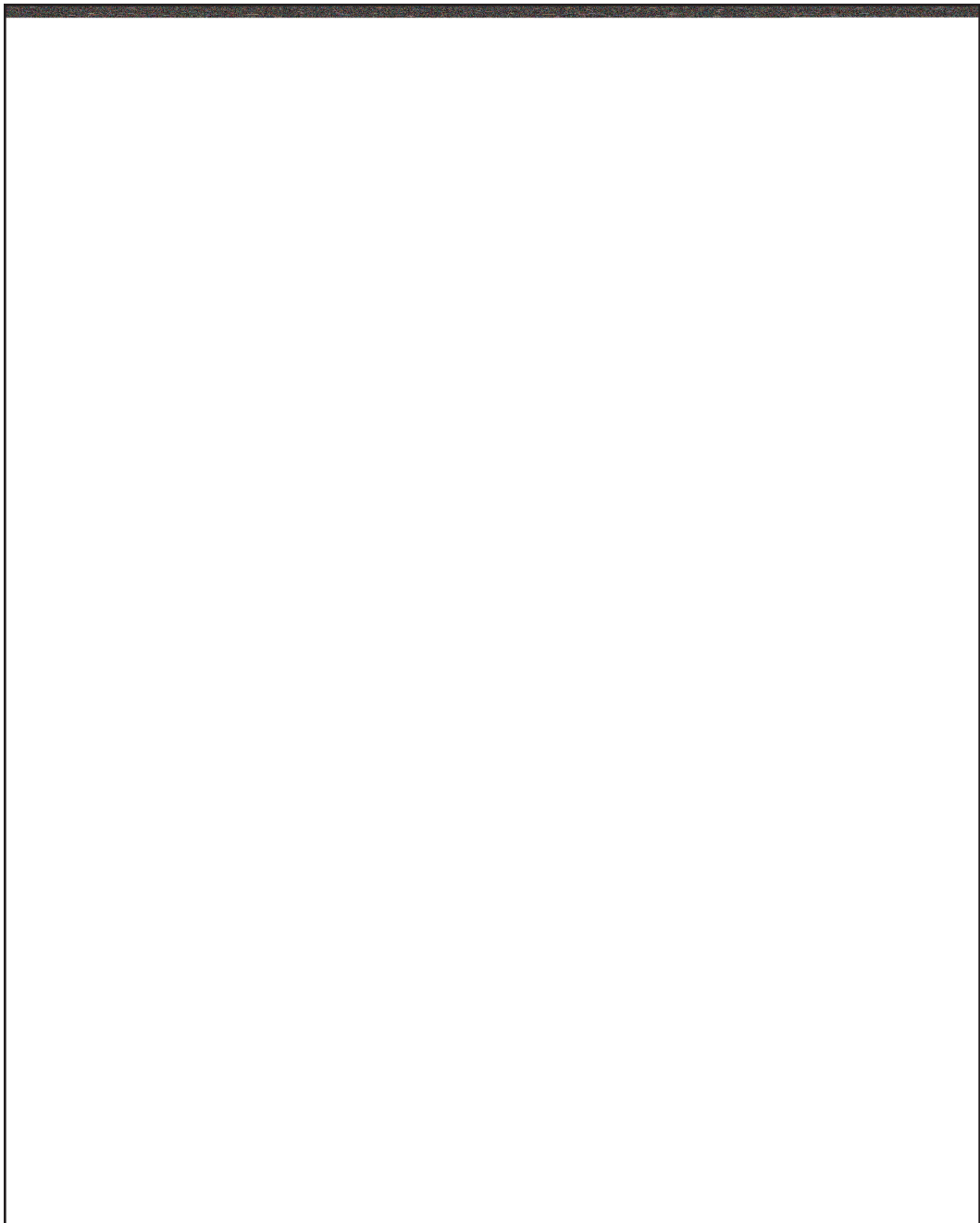


Fig. 3.3 - Landscape of the Dry Zone of Sri Lanka.

The distinctive features of the ancient hydraulic civilization of Sri Lanka is the human imprint of the present landscape of the Dry Zone

- Sanctuaries like Yala, Wilpattu, Kumana and forest reserves like Somawathi, Maduru Oya and Wasgamuwa are specific features in the landscape of the Dry Zone.
- Location of various religious centers which are frequently visited by people is also a significant feature of this landscape. Sacred “Sri Maha Bodhi” and stupas at Anuradhapura, Madu Church at Mannar, Koneswaram Hindu Temple at Trincomalee, Kirivehera and Skandha Kumara Devala at Kataragama and mosques in the Eastern region could be shown as examples.

Activities.

1. Describe physical and human features of the landscape of the Dry Zone separately.
2. What is the solution adopted by the people in the Dry Zone to overcome the scarcity of water?
3. Mark and name the followings on an outline map of Sri Lanka. Anuradhapura, Madu Church, Kataragama, Sigiriya, Wilpattu sanctuary, Somawathi Forest Reserve and five main tanks in the Dry Zone.

Landscape of the Wet Zone

A landscape of wet zone can be seen in the Southwestern, Western and Eastern slopes of the Central Hills of Sri Lanka.

The dynamism created by diurnal mobility of the people, automobile and service activities, is the specific feature of this region.

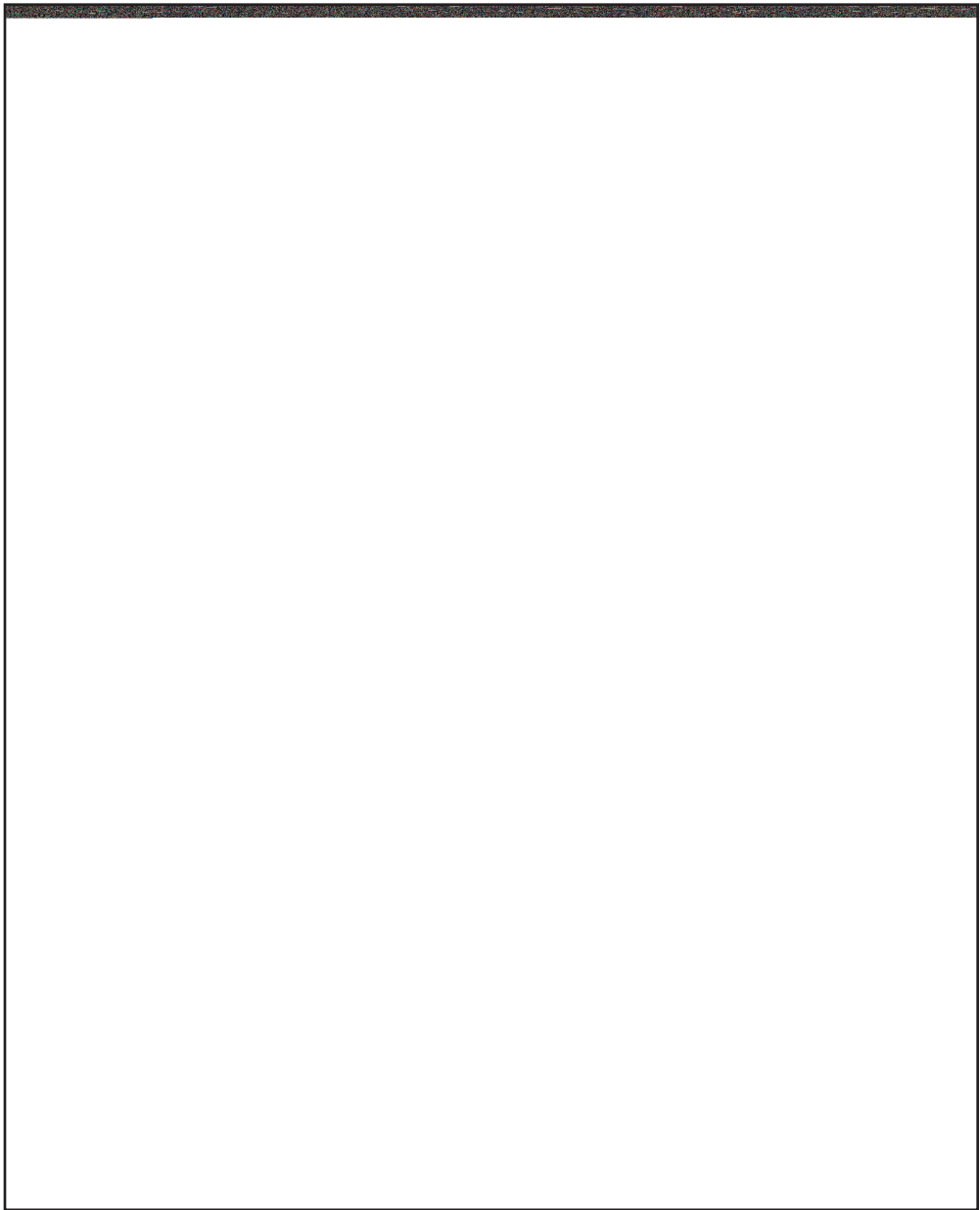


Fig. 3.4 - The landscape of the Wet Zone of Sri Lanka

- A physical landscape consisting of flat lands, ridges, rivers flowing throughout the year, marshy lands, rich vegetation cover and the specific bio diversity are the significant features of the landscape of the Wet Zone.

- Physical landscape is subjected to constant changes due to frequent flooding and earth slips caused by heavy rains.
- Flood plains formed along the river valleys due to the constant flooding have been converted into rich farmlands. The Kelani river valley is mainly utilized for growing vegetables under the “Koratu” method.
- The human landscape of this zone where a high population is living too possesses complex features.
- A diversity of agricultural land use can be seen in the Wet Zone as coconut cultivation on coastal region, paddy cultivation in river valleys and rubber and tea plantation on the mountain slopes etc.
- Cities like Colombo and towns like Gampaha, Matara, Galle, Negombo, Kandy and Kalutara that are important as urban, industrial and service centers can be identified as a special feature of this landscape.
- Population migrated to the main towns in search of jobs due to the establishment of free trade zones like Katunayake, Koggala and Biyagama and industrial colonies associated with the towns like Rathmalana and Ekala have been accumulated in the Wet Zone.
- The complexity of the landscape of Wet Zone is emphasized by the hospitals, police stations, banks, courts, shopping complexes as well as by sky scrapers. This zone can be identified as a region with well developed infrastructure to facilitate human needs.
- A developed transportation network consisting of well developed road systems, express ways, over head bridges and railway lines is seen in the landscape of the Wet Zone.
- Fast developing planned towns and a landscape mixing urban and rural features too could be seen here. The dynamism of the landscape is depicted by the high population that come to the towns daily to avail the services available and also by the number of vehicles that come to these towns.

The capital of Sri Lanka, Sri Jayawardanapura, Kotte and the commercial capital, Colombo are located in Wet Zone.

Existence of regions which were subjected to mass movement due to clay mining, unlimited gem mining, deforestation, development activities that damage the environment is also a special feature. Due to this, the problems like earth slips, drying of underground water springs, sinking of buildings, breeding of mosquitoes and domestic flies have emerged.

Activities.

1. Trace an outline map of Sri Lanka
 - I. Draw the Wet Zone following the teacher's instructions.
 - II. Mark and name the followings using an atlas of Sri Lanka..
Colombo, Gampaha, Katutura, Galle, Matara and Kandy.
The investment promotion zones of Katunayake, Koggala and Biyagama.
2. State six main features that can be found in the landscape of the Wet Zone.
3. Write three factors that create a live and dynamic landscape in the Wet Zone.
4. Using drawings or pictures, display the landscape of the Wet Zone.

Landscape associated with Jaffna Peninsula and surrounding islands.

Jaffna peninsula and islands like Delft, Kytes and Nainativu close to it are located in the Northern region of Sri Lanka.

- Flat lands, lagoons, islands, sand sheets, rich red soil, lime stone soil and underground water are the striking features of the landscape associated with the Jaffna peninsula and islands region.

- This region does not receive rainfall from the main types of rain. Hence, physical landscape as well as human landscape are built on factors like low rainfall, high temperature and high evaporation rate.
- Well developed agro land utilization using sweep wells from the past and pumping of water at present is the main feature in the human landscape. Vegetables like potatoes, chillies, red onions, beetroot and fruits like grapes, mango and banana are grown in farms maintained with ground water.
- Coastal fishing industry, handicraft industry and producing salt which are carried out using the resources in the region are characteristics of the human landscape.
- Abundance of palmyra palm and using them for day today activities is a main feature of this region. Roofs thatched with palmyra fronds and fences covered with palmyra fronds, food produced associated with Palmyra and goods produced using Palmyra palms are common here.
- Features like Hindu Temples (Nallur), religious festivals, processions as well as devotees are a part of this culture based on Hindu religion.
- The coastal areas suitable for bathing and diving located around the main land and island, the Eastern coast, bird sanctuary at Chundikulam and Nainativu have made this region a tourist zone.

Though it is a harsh landscape, it possesses both a specific cultural identity and rich economy built by strong work, ethics and great effort.

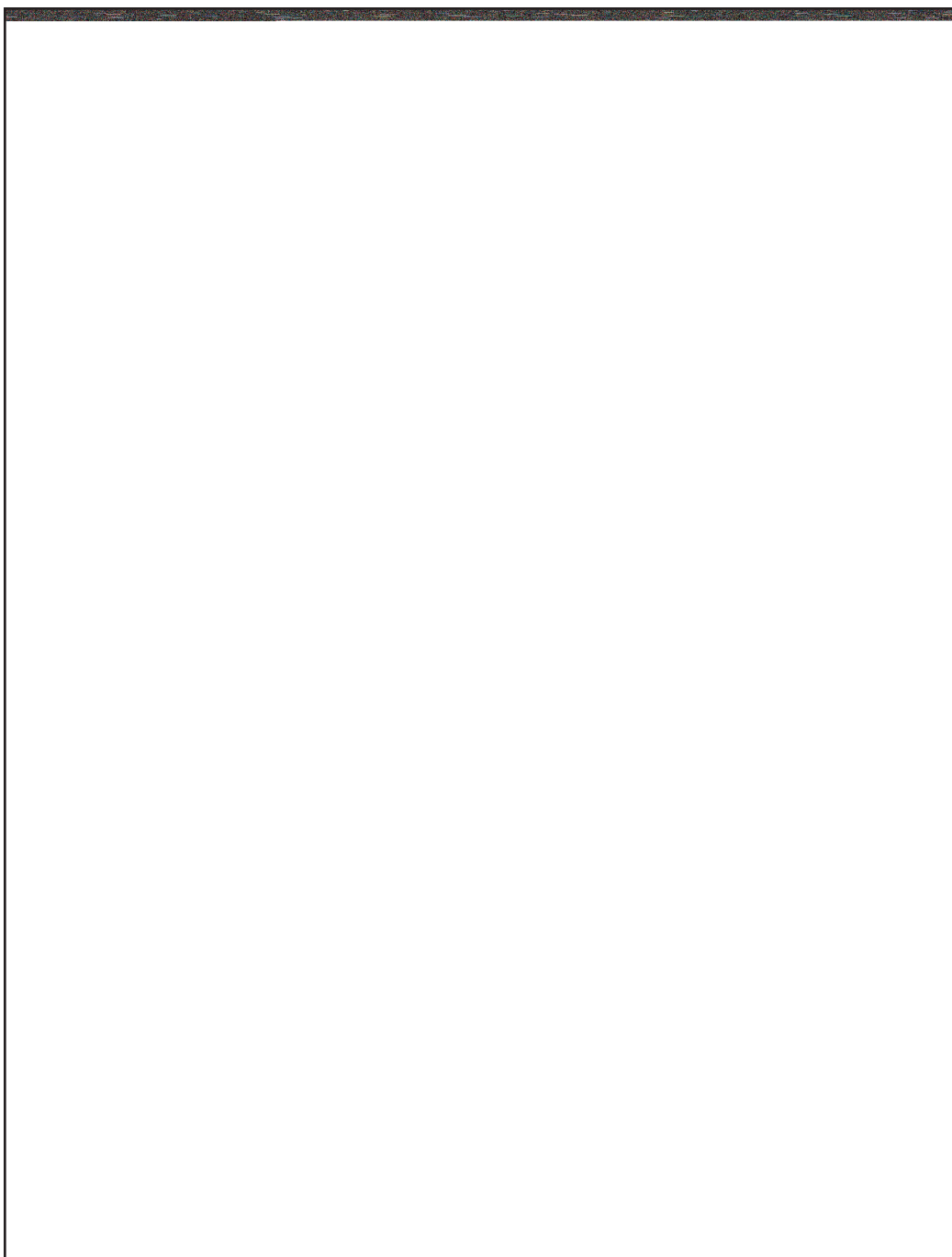


Fig. 3.5 - Landscape associated with Jaffna peninsula and the surrounding islands

Activities.

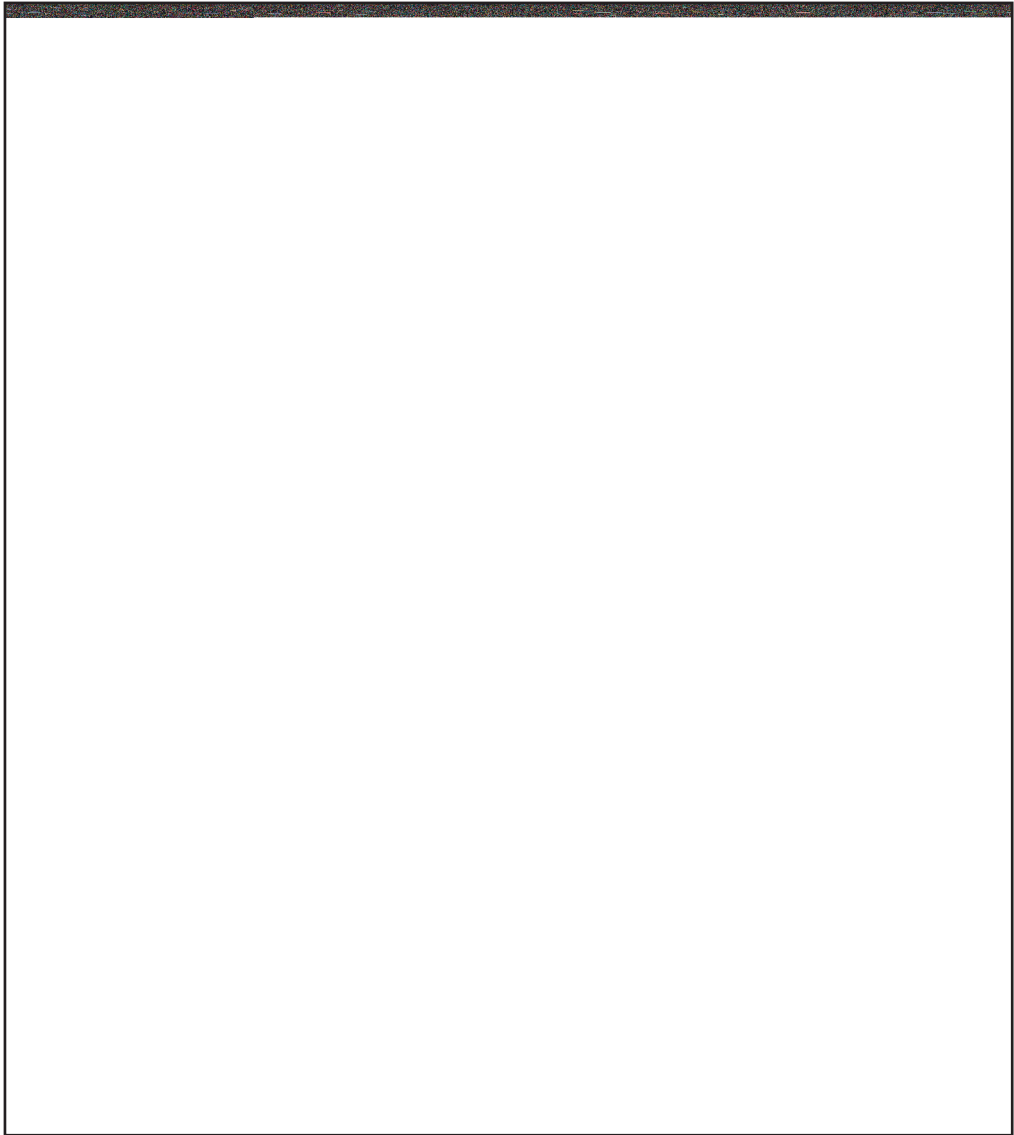
1. Write separately the specific features of the physical and human landscapes associated with Jaffna peninsula and islands.
2. Prepare a handbill about the unique cultural features that could be seen in the landscape associated with the islands of Jaffna Peninsula.
3. Mark and name Kayts, Delft, Nagadeepa, Nallur kovil, Saltern at Elephant Pass on a sketch map of Sri Lanka.
4. Explain how the Palmyra palm is useful to the people of Jaffna peninsula.

Landscape of the coastal belt

The coastal belt that runs around Sri Lanka with physical features like islands, bays, lagoons, points and marshes possesses a unique landscape. The mangroves that grow along the coast, coral reefs as well as attractive sand sheets are basic features of this landscape. A human landscape built on this physical landscape can also be seen.

- The attractive coastal areas like Tangalle, Hambantota, Pasi kuda, Unawatuna, Arugam Bay and beautiful coral reefs at Hikkaduwa have attracted the tourists. Hotels, restaurants archaeological places, light houses, religious centers, sanctuaries, recreational centers and national forest reserves persuade tourists to visit this zone frequently.
- The fishing industry conducted in shallow sea along the coast and in lagoons, mangrove marshes and fishing settlements distributed along the coastal belt are also the features specific to this zone.

- Various industries carried out based on the resources found in the coastal area are also a special feature of human landscape. Coir products, dry fish products, limestone industry etc can be shown as examples.
- There are also occasions where coastal landscape has been damaged due to some human activities like breaking of coral reefs and removal of sand from the beach etc.



3.6 Figure. The landscape associate with the coast.

Attractive landscape with a diversity of physical features located around Sri Lanka where local and foreign tourists visit frequently.

It is clear to you that, though Sri Lanka is a small island, the landscapes that are different to each other can be found. If a person travels either from North to South or East to West of Sri Lanka, he may observe all these landscapes even within a day.

Activity

1. Name the specific features of the landscape associated with the coastal belt of Sri Lanka.
2. Mark and name two of bays, lagoons, points and islands and three tourist attractions located in the coastal belt.

Assignment

1. Mark the five landscapes you have learnt on a blank map of Sri Lanka.
2. Prepare a flip chart including the specific features of the landscapes of those five zones.
3. Study the landscape of the region you live, and describe the physical features and human activities that can be found there.
4. Prepare a brochure including tourist attraction to be distributed to tourist on wonder of the Hill Country.

Glosary

● Landscape	- භූ දර්ශනය	- நிலத்தோற்றம்
● Mountain ranges	- කඳුවැටි	- லைத்தொடர்கள்
● Waterfalls	- දියඇලි	- நீர்வீழ்ச்சிகள்
● Plateaus	- සානු	- மேட்டு நிலங்கள்
● gaps	- කපොලා	- கணவாய்கள்

● ruins	- නටඹුන්	- எச்சங்கள்/ சிதைவுகள்
● hydraulic civilization	- වාරි ශිෂ්ටාචාරය	- நீர்வள நாகரிகம்
● residual hills	- ශේෂ කඳු	- எச்சக் குன்றுகள்
● Fortress	- ආරක්ෂක බලකොටුව	- பாதுகாப்பு அரண்
● Parks	- වනෝද්‍යාන	- வனப்பூங்கா
● Vegetation covers	- වෘක්ෂලතා වැස්ම	- தாவரப் போர்வை
● Bio diversity	- ජෛව විවිධත්වය	- உயிர்பல்லினத் தன்மை
● Flood plain	- පිටාර තැන්න	- வெள்ளச் சமவெளி
● Koratu cultivation	- කොරටු වගාව	- தோட்டச் செய்கை
● Physical landscape	- භෞතික භූ දර්ශනය	- பௌதீக லத்தோற்றம்
● Human landscape	- මානුෂ භූ දර්ශනය	- மானிட லத்தோற்றம்
● Land use pattern of agriculture land	- කෘෂි භූමි පරිභෝග රටාව	- விவசாய நிலப்பயன்பாட்டுமுறை
● Trade zone	- වෙළෙඳ කලාප	- கைத்தொழில் குடியேற்றங்கள்
● Infrastructure facilities	- යටිතල පහසුකම්	- உட்கட்டமைப்பு வசதிகள்
● Migration	- සංක්‍රමණය	- இடப்பெயர்வு
● Express ways	- අධිවේගී මාර්ග	- அதிவேகப் பெருந்தெருக்கள்
● Fly Over	- ජුවන් පාලම්	- மேம்பாலங்கள்
● Landslips / land slides	- නායයෑම්	- நிலச்சரிவுகள் / நிலச் சறுக்கல்
● Wet zone	- තෙත් කලාපය	- ஈர வலயம்
● Sweep well	- ආඩියා ලිං	- ஆடியா கணிறு
● Sands sheet	- වැලිතලා	- மணல் வெளிகள்
● Coral reefs	- කොරල්පර	- முருகைக் கற்பாறைகள்
● Lagoons	- කලපු	- கடனீரேரிகள்
● Mangroves	- කඩොල් වගුරු	- கண்டல் தாவரங்கள்
● Saline marsh	- ලවණ වගුරු	- உவர் சதுப்புக்கள்
● Industrial colony	- කාර්මික ජනපද	- கைத்தொழில் குடியேற்றங்கள்