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Ch8. Human Environment Interaction- The Tropical and Subtropical Regions

Study the chapter carefully

Nature is varied and so is the plant and animal life of each region. This has an impact upon the human life too. So, man's needs differ from area to area.

The climate, the vegetation, the wildlife—all are different in different parts of the

world. The life of the people of each region is also different and is largely linked to the natural environment of any area. Though, the basic needs of all are the same, yet how those needs are met may be different. Life of the people in the deserts is quite different

from that of people living in the tropical and sub-tropical areas. Let's explore the different regions around the world and know more about them.

The tropical and subtropical regions extend between 30°N and 30°S of the Equator. The



climate within this belt is generally warm with abundant rainfall. To know more about these regions, we shall look into the details of two regions—the **Amazon Basin** which lies between 15°N and 15°S latitudes in the tropical region and the **Ganga-Brahmaputra Basin** which lies in the subtropical zone between 20°N and 30°N latitudes.

### Insight

The River Amazon was discovered by a Spanish explorer named **Vincente Yanes Pinzoin**.

## THE AMAZON BASIN

The river Amazon is the second longest river in the world and largest in terms of volume of water carried by it. It originates from the Andes Mountains in Peru and flows eastwards into the Atlantic Ocean. Its vast river basin covers the parts of Brazil, Peru, Equador, Columbia and Venezuela. It has more than 1000 tributaries and has the largest basin in the world.

### Key Question 1

Which is the largest river in the world in terms of volume of water?

### Climate and Vegetation

The Amazon Basin lies in the equatorial region where the climate remains hot and wet all round the year. The average temperature is around 30°C and the annual rainfall is more than 200 cm. It rains here almost daily and the humidity is very high though the nights are comparatively cooler. There is very little difference between the length of day and night.

The warm wet climate results in thick evergreen forests called tropical rain forests.

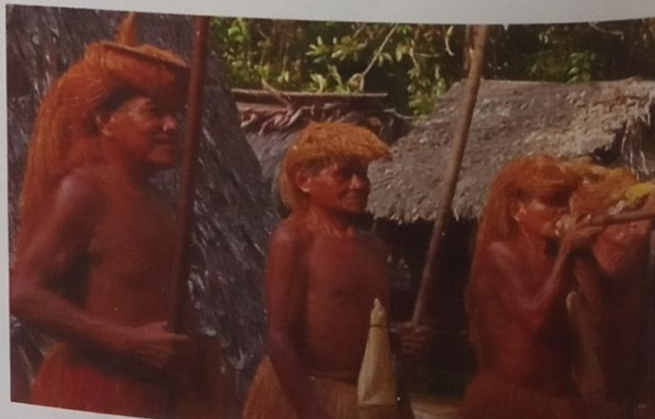
These are called 'selvas'. The trees here are tall with thick foliage which prevents sunlight from reaching the ground. The interior of these forests are therefore dark and damp which promotes the thick growth of climbers and ferns along with tall trees. The main trees are Ebony, Mahogany, Rosewood, Rubber and Cinchona which are hardwood trees. Balsa, the lightest wood is also found in these forests. The forests yield a variety of products ranging from rubber, nuts, gum, resins to quinine which is a drug used to cure malaria.

### Wildlife

The evergreen forests of the Amazon Basin are like a Gigantic Zoo—very rich in wildlife which includes mammals like monkeys, jaguars, pumas, tapirs, sloths, anteaters, etc. A variety of birds, and insects are also found here. The basin is home to several species of reptiles and snakes like pythons, anaconda and crocodiles as well. Several species of freshwater fish are also found in the rivers.

### People

The Amazon Basin is a home of several tribes who lead a primitive life, collecting food by hunting and fishing. They live in small huts made of branches and leaves. Generally, these are built on platforms in order to avoid flood waters.





They grow crops like tapioca, sweet potato, pineapple, bananas, etc. Patches of land are cleared in order to grow these crops. This is known as slash and burn agriculture. Certain cash crops like rubber, coffee, cocoa and nuts are also grown commercially.

This region is also rich in minerals like gold, iron ore, copper, manganese and bauxite. So, mining is also carried on.

### Insight

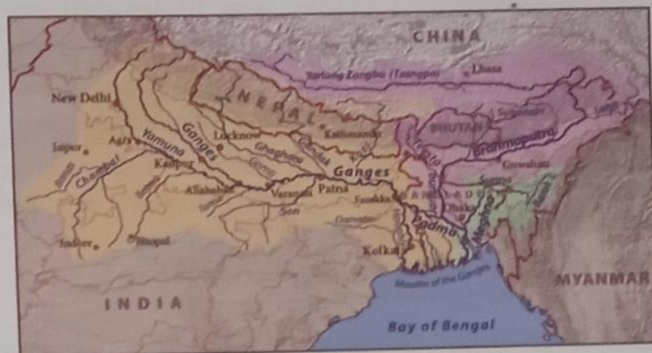
Slash and burn agriculture is practiced in North-Eastern parts of India too. The Amazon river alone carries more volume of water, that is together carried by the ten big rivers of the world.

Life in the Amazon basin is gradually changing. The construction of the Trans-Amazonian Highway has made all parts of the basin accessible. But the developmental activities are causing destruction of the biologically diverse forests. Forest areas are disappearing very rapidly due to large scale constructional activities.

### THE GANGA-BRAHMAPUTRA BASIN

The Ganga-Brahmaputra Basin is one of the largest river basins in the world. Lying south of the Himalayas, it extends approximately 2500 km between River Sutlej in the west to River Brahmaputra in the east. The area is drained by the River Ganga, River Brahmaputra and their tributaries. Together, they have created one of the most fertile plains land in the world. The main tributaries of the River Ganga are—Yamuna, Ghaghara, Gomti, Gandak, Kosi, Betwa, Son, Damodar, etc. The River Brahmaputra flows through three different countries and is known by different names. In Tibet, it is called Tsangpo and in Bangladesh it is called Jamuna and Meghna. Both the

ivers, Ganga and Brahmaputra, originate from glaciers and after running through the plains of the subcontinent in their distinct course, they join in their lower course before falling into the Bay of Bengal. Together, these form the world's largest and fastest growing 'delta', called the **Sunderbans**.



The Ganga-Brahmaputra Basin

### Let's Find OUT

Suggest two ways in which developmental activities cause a negative impact upon the environment?

### Climate and Vegetation

The Ganga-Brahmaputra basin lies in the subtropical region and enjoys a monsoon type of climate. Here, the summers are hot and wet, and the winters are cool and dry. The South-West Monsoon winds blowing between June and September bring heavy rainfall. As these rivers flow through the regions of heavy rainfall, they carry a huge amount of silt which helps in enriching the flood plains of North India.

The topography in this basin is varied. While certain areas are mountainous, the majority of area is a plain. The mountains are steep and inhospitable but the plains are fertile and support dense population. The vegetation cover varies according to landforms. The lower mountains are covered

with thick tropical deciduous forests where trees like teak, sal and bamboo are found. These have great commercial value. The delta region has mangrove forests where Sundari trees are mainly found. The Sundari trees grow in abundance in this region. As the soil in the plains is very fertile, the forest cover has been removed to give way to agriculture. Food crops like rice, wheat, sorghum, gram and millets are grown on a large scale. Cash crops like sugar cane, cotton, jute and tea are also cultivated in several areas.

### Key Question 2

How does the Sunderban get its name?

#### Wildlife

The Ganga plain is devoid of much wildlife as the area has dense population. But in the Brahmaputra plains, elephants, tigers, deer, monkeys and even the one horned Rhinoceros are found. The delta area is the home of the Royal Bengal Tiger, crocodiles and alligators. The area is also rich in aquatic life.

#### People

The mountain area being inhospitable is sparsely populated but the plains support a very dense population. Agriculture is the main occupation here.

Food crops like rice, wheat, maize, sorghum and nuts are cultivated over large areas. Cash crops like sugar cane, cotton, jute and tea are grown in different areas depending upon the climatic conditions.

#### IMPORTANT TERMS

Fruits like bananas, vegetables, pulses and oilseeds are also grown. Though, the size of the farms is small, the primitive methods of agriculture have been replaced by modern farming techniques. Several agro-based industries have developed in the Ganga plain. The Brahmaputra plain is rich in mineral deposits like petroleum. Several small scale and cottage industries have also come up in this region.



Tribal People

The entire region has a good network of roads and railways. In certain portions, the river is navigable and has inland waterways too. Today, it is the most densely populated part of the country dotted with several important cities like the capital New Delhi, Lucknow, Kanpur, Varanasi, Patna, Kolkata to name a few. Several industrial towns have also emerged in this basin. Dense population and industrial growth has led to the pollution of the rivers. The government is making efforts to save these rivers. The **Ganga Action Plan** is a project undertaken by the government to cleanse the River Ganga.



3. The Prairies experience \_\_\_\_\_ climatic conditions.
4. Very large farms where animals are reared in a systematic manner are called \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Velds, the temperate grasslands of Africa are rich in minerals like \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

**C. State whether the following statements are True or False:**

1. The grasslands of America are called the Velds.
2. Agriculture, cattle rearing and mining are the main occupations in the Prairies.
3. Prairies have a good network of roads, railways and inland waterways.
4. The climate of the temperate regions is generally moderate and the areas are covered with vast grasslands.

**II Very Short Answer Questions**

1. What type of vegetation is found in the temperate regions?
2. What are the main occupations of the people of the temperate grasslands?
3. Why are the Prairies called the 'Granary of the World'?
4. What is High Veld?
5. What are ranches?
6. What is the location of the temperate grasslands in the world?

**III Short Answer Questions**

1. Where are the 'Prairies' located?
2. What is Chinook?
3. Name the mineral based industries of South Africa?
4. Why is agriculture not an important occupation in the Velds?
5. Describe in brief about the vegetation cover and wildlife in the Prairies?
6. In the Prairies, trees are found mostly along the river course? Why? **(HOTS)**
7. Which type of climate is experienced in the veld?
8. Instead of agriculture, mining and animal rearing are the main occupations in the Veld. Why. **(HOTS)**

**IV Long Answer Questions.**

1. How is the climate of the 'Prairies' different from that of the 'Velds'?
2. How has the discovery of minerals influenced the life of the people in the Prairies?
3. What type of vegetation and wildlife is found in the Velds? Is there any danger to the wildlife there? What steps have been taken to protect them?
4. Which mineral deposits are found in the temperate grasslands of Africa? Give details.
5. The farmers in the Prairie grasslands' used machines for agriculture. Why? **(HOTS)**

**Solve above questions based on previous study materials**

