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Ch: NATURAL VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE (Notes)

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 **virgin vegetation**.

The term **flora** is used to denote plants of a particular region or period. The species of animals are referred to as **fauna**. This huge diversity in flora and fauna kingdom is due to the following factors:

1) Relief

Land

Land affects natural vegetation directly and indirectly.

- 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 wildlife.

Soil

Different types of soils provide a 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 soil at the hill slopes has conical trees.

2) Climate

Temperature

The character and extent of vegetation are mainly determined by temperature along with humidity in the air, precipitation and soil. The fall in the temperature affects the vegetation and its growth.

Photoperiod (Sunlight)

The variation in the duration of sunlight at different places is due to differences in latitude, altitude, season and duration of the day. Due to the longer duration of sunlight, trees grow faster in summer.

Precipitation

Areas of heavy rainfall have more dense vegetation as compared to areas of less rainfall.

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