

NATURAL VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE

SOME IMPORTANT

- India is physiographically diverse country.
- Notably, the Himalaya and the Western Ghats are biodiversity hotspots.
- India has many perennial rivers and lakes which support diverse vegetations and wildlife.
- Even some forests maintained by communities are notified as sacred forests in the name of deities.
- Forests are economically important for tribals as it is their whole and sole source of income and livelihood.

SOME DEFINITIONS

- **Forests:** In general, the word forest is used by administrators and general public to denote a large tract covered by trees and shrubs.
- **Virgin Forests:** The part of the natural vegetation which has remained undisturbed by humans because these vegetations were inaccessible to humans are known as virgin vegetations. ex. remote part of Himalayas, Sunderbans etc.
- **Flora:** Flora means plants of a particular time and space i.e. particular region or period and considered as a group.
- **Fauna:** The animal species of a particular region, habitat, or geological period.
- **Vegetation:** Vegetation on the other hand refers to the group of different plant species in given environment. For example, cultivated field of rice or mango orchard is vegetation but not a natural one.
- **Natural Vegetation:** It is vegetation that grows in wild without human aid.

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Factors affecting natural vegetation

- **Land:** The nature of land influences the type of vegetation. The fertile level is suitable for agriculture, sloping hills are suitable for coffee plantation. Whereas the tall grasslands and rough terrains are suitable for wildlife.
- **Soil:** Soil varies over space. Black soil in Deccan plateau is suitable for cotton, sandy soils of the desert support cactus and thorny bushes, deltaic soils support mangroves and hill slopes with some depth of soil have conical trees.
- **Temperature:** What type of vegetation will region have depends on what is the temperature of the region, amount of humidity present in the air, amount of precipitation and type of soil. As we go higher the altitude, temperature decreases and it snows instead of raining and trees therein are well adapted against the snowfall. For example, Himalayas support coniferous trees.
- **Photoperiod:** Duration of sunlight changes with reference to place. This difference can be because of altitude, latitude, season and duration of the day. Usually trees grow faster in summer.
- **Precipitation:** India has a monsoon climate.