

Natural Vegetation of South Asia

INDIA:

The natural vegetation of a country or area mainly depends on its temperature and amount of rainfall and human efforts. Most areas of India are in the monsoon region. That is why both type tropical and semi monsoonal vegetation is seen in this region which was situated almost 900 meters below the sea level. The variation of vegetation in this region depends upon the amount of rain. In most areas, due to mass population pressure and due to increase of human necessities, the trees and forests lands have been converted in to agricultural lands or animal farms. That is why, natural vegetation found in India can be sub-divided in to following types:

1. Tropical wet evergreen & semi evergreen forests:

Such vegetation is found in those areas of India which are 900 meters above the sea level and these areas also receive 250 or more annual rainfall in these forests, some trees are very famous for its solid & hard wood, these trees are usually very thick, dense and huge in size. These trees are found on the western side of the Western Ghats, which are 300 to 600 meters above from the sea level. Besides this in the southern eastern Assam, Mizoram, Islands of Indiman and the adjoining Himalayas areas of West Bengal such trees are found, which are 300 to 600 meters above from the sea level. These are mostly Palm cane, etc.

In the state of Assam and north western Bengal, coastal areas of Orissa, Western coastal plain areas, where annual rainfall occurs below 200 to 250 cm. In these areas semi deciduous forests can be seen. These trees devoid their leaves once in the dry season.

Sub-tropical or temperate, wet hill forests:

These types of forests are found in those areas of India, which are 900 to 1850 meters above from the sea level. In these areas, we can find, various types of trees, like teak, and Sagwan are prominent. These forests are found or can be seen in the hilly areas of Bil Gari (Bastar district) and on the mountain areas of Ganga Plain in South India.

Forests of wet temperate:

These evergreen forests in India are found in mountain valley of Cardamom, and in the areas of western Karnataka state which are 1850 meters above from the sea level. In many areas, tea and rubber crop in being cultivated after cutting these trees.

Tropical deciduous forests:

These are the areas of India, which receive below 200 cm. annual rainfall and also these remain under dry climate for long period, here the semi evergreen shed forests are found. Usually these trees shed their leaves in the dry hot months of March to May. In the areas of 200 cm. annual rainfall, hard wood trees are found, like, Teak, Sandal, Peepal and other various trees are prominent.

In the Maharashtra state's district of area Chandrapur, Balsihar shah, Jabalpur (Madhya Pradesh) are famous for teak wood, and western Bengal mountain areas of West Bengal which are situated on the east bank of river Jamuna is famous for soft wood. In the areas of Karnataka plateau, which receive 100 cm. annual rainfall are famous for Shisham, Tando, Mohava, Neim trees.

Savanna and Steppe grass lands:

Dry Savanna: These areas are not having sufficient amount of forests, trees are almost extinct, and this type of vegetation is found in these areas which receive less than 60 to 100 cm. of rainfall annually. So the forests are being transformed into farms or agricultural lands. So in the rainy season these areas are constantly transformed in to grass lands. It includes the areas of East Rajasthan, Arawali Range, east or north Punjab, Dry area of Karnataka, South western part of Andhra Pradesh and west Ghats or Cardamom Mountains & dry areas of eastern cardamom mountains. In most of these areas, grass lands are found and in some places, different types of trees like, Shesham, Neim, Peepal, are found.

Semi dry Area's vegetation: This type of vegetation is found, those areas of India, which receive 30 to 60 cm. annual rainfall. The adjoining areas of Rajasthan desert, some areas of Kathiawar, besides this north Arawali Range, Western Ghats, Aranya & East Punjab, and the dry areas of Karnataka state receive less than 50 cm.

of rainfall annually. The vegetation of these areas is usually, Date Palm trees, lands, Jund, Farash, Bairi, Kicker are prominent.

6. Desert Vegetation:

In the western sides of Rajasthan desert which receive less than 10 to 30 cm. of rain annually. Due to severe hot & dry weather only thorny bushes bunches of grass are found. Because of thorny bushes and wild vegetation, major occupation of the people is sheep rearing and camel.

7. Vegetation of Coastal Areas:

In India is, both western and eastern coastal areas are affected by waves, and here the bush type vegetation & some trees are found. Compare to western coasts along with eastern coasts, many rivers and on its Deltaic areas, and areas are having this type of vegetation, for example, river Ganga, Godavari, Krishna and coastal areas of Indian are famous for this type of vegetation, and the Ganga river delta, in the large area, Sundari tree is found, and to these types of trees, the area is known as Sundarban or Sundarban Forest. Here, we find many Sundar wood, which is used mostly for the purpose of fuel. Besides this, trees of palm cane, and many other are also found.

8. Vegetation of Himalayas:

In the both parts of Himalayas different type of conditions can be seen. Many peaks remain snow covered throughout the year. In the valley or in the middle of the mountains, evergreen type of vegetation is found.

And those areas, which are 1500 to 3650 meters above from the sea level, having tropical type forests. The eastern parts of Himalayas are linked with tropic and also hot tropical regions. However in both parts east or western parts of Himalayas have similarity in terms of vegetation, because of climatic difference. Therefore, the details of various type of vegetation in eastern & western Himalayas are given below.

(i) Vegetation of East Himalayas: Those areas, which are above 1500 meters above the sea level, have the monsoonal type evergreen forests in their valleys. These are very dense and of various kinds. Most of them are sal, Shisham and Kikar trees. In the areas of Terai to Bhabar type of trees are found, and at the height of 1500 to 1830 meters, trees of panees and khasia are found and in some parts, trees of Peepal, burch, Mongolia are found, and in the high altitude areas of 2750 to 3650 meters have the trees of sharp leaves Deodar, Sinober, Saproos, Silver fur, Saproos just like the cold tropical areas. And in the high altitudes areas of 3960 meters and above, grass type of vegetation is found.

Vegetation of Western Himalayas:

These western areas of Himalayas are less humid than eastern areas of Himalayas. That's why, the amount of rainfall differ in terms of areas. However in some areas like Gharhwal and near the central areas of Himalayas dense forests are found these trees include, soil, Shisham, Himal and many others, and in the central areas of Siwalak, trees of walnuts and their are prominent, from the trees of Cheir, we can have oil of turpentine, besides this, their grass called "**Bhabar**" is also found, which is used in the paper industry. Deodar trees are found in the 1500 to 3350 meters height, Silver fur trees are found in the areas 150 to 2600 meters above the sea level. And other trees like Blue pine, Saproos, Oak, Walnuts, Poplar are found in the areas of 2600 to 3050 meters above from the sea level. Due to special quality of Deodar wood, it is recognized as a very productive export source, of occupied Kashmir & Himachal Pradesh. Beside this, the trees and plant of Apple, Walnuts, Almonds, Chalgoza are also cultivated.

Vegetation of Pakistan

The natural vegetation of a country or area mainly depends on its temperature and the amount of rainfall and the type of soil which it possess. In terms of soil, temperature, rainfall so the natural vegetation can be divided in to following types :

1. **Forests.**
2. **Grass Lands.**
3. **Desert & Semi - Desert Shrub.**

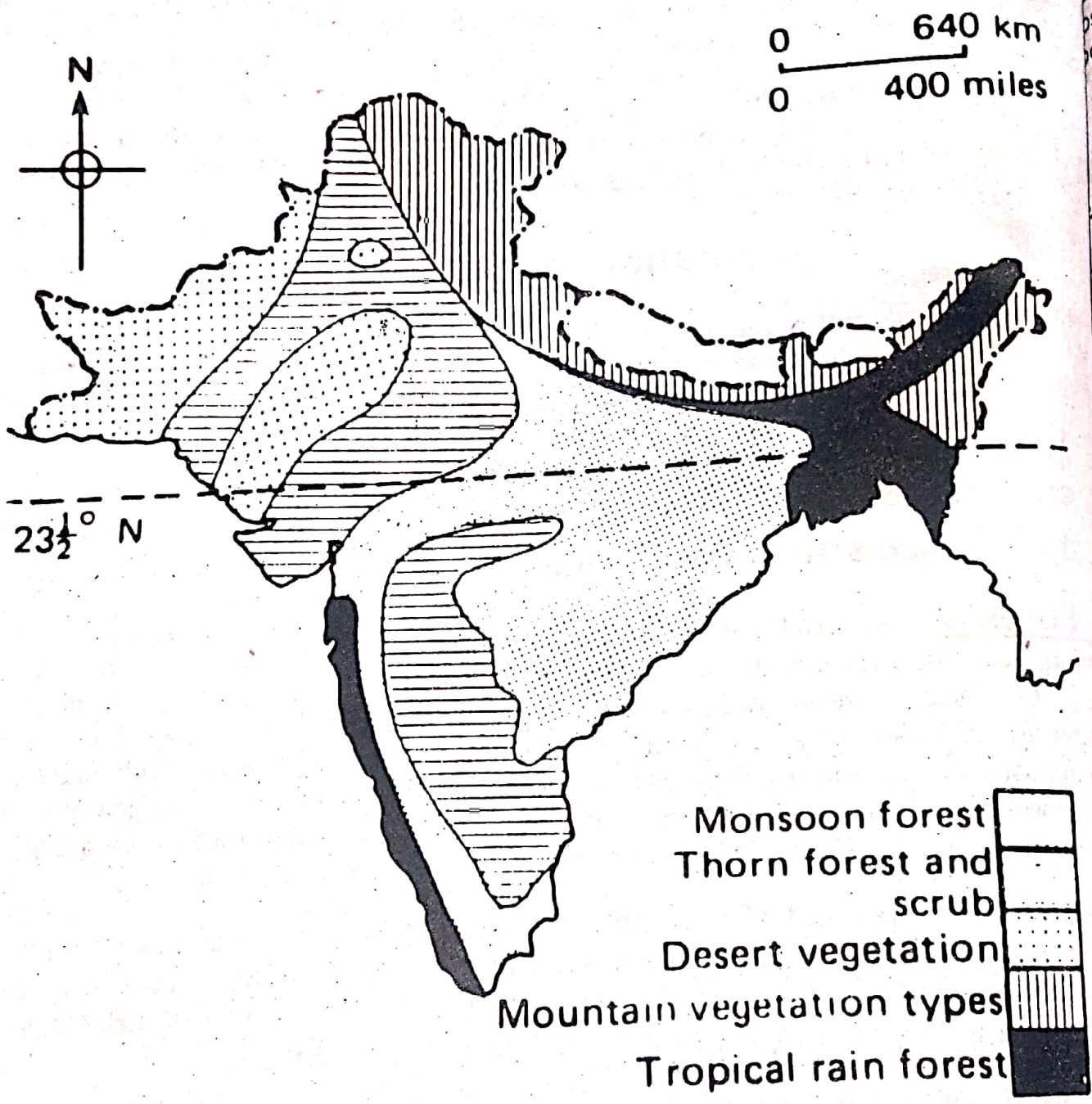
Forests: According to experts our country was once covered with natural vegetation, but these forests were cut down or burned to make way for cultivation and animals. The forest covered areas have been, considerably reduced. At the time of establishment of Pakistan about 5 million Hectare areas was covered with natural or artificial forests. It was about 2.6 percent of the total area, which was insufficient for the country's needs, because according to experts the area under forests in a country could not be less than 20 to 25% percent for a well balanced economy.

Pakistan only 4.5 percent of the total area is under forests. The Government has taken various steps to increase the areas under forests, large areas have been reserved for forestation in Thal, Ghulam Muhammad Barrage, and Gudu Barrage and this is likely to improve the future acreage of forests to some extent.

Besides this forest department celebrates weeks for tree plantation in the months of spring and rainy season. During these weeks people are encouraged to plant more trees. The forests found in our country may be classified in to following types.

1. Natural forests.	2. Artificial forests.
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The Refrain or Bela forests:

These forests are found along the banks of big rivers especially the lower Indus. The main varieties include are Shisham and babul trees. The Shisham wood is mostly used for furniture, and the bark of babul is used for tanning purposes and its wood as fuel.

Artificial Forests (The Rukh):

These are dry Shrub forests found in isolated patches far away from urban centers all over the arid plains of Pakistan. The government has been making efforts to enhance the forest covered area, by providing irrigation facilities.

The main species which are generally found in these forests are Jund, Farash and Karil. The wood of these trees is mostly used for fuel purposes. These type of forests are being planted in the Punjab province, Chichawatni, Kasowal, Peruwal (Multan) Changa Manga (Kasur).

Grass Lands:

Most of the areas of our country have less than 10" inches of rainfall, which is insufficient for the growth of forests. Before the introduction of canal irrigation most of the areas in Punjab consisted of grass lands. But under the green revolution schemes, most of the grass lands have been brought under cultivation; only a few patches of good quality grass exist where cultivation cannot be carried on for want of water, but some poor quality grass in patches, large or small, is to be found in the hilly areas of the Potohar plateau and the mountainous slopes of Balochistan and NWFP province.

