



### **Natural Vegetation:**

We see a variety of plant life in our surroundings. How nice it is to play in a field with green grasses and there are also small plants called bushes and shrubs like cactus and flowering plants etc. besides there are many tall trees some with many branches and leaves like neem, mango or some which stand with few leaves such as palm. The grasses, shrubs and trees, which grow on their own without interference or help from human beings, are called natural vegetation.

Due to varied climatic conditions, India has a wide range of natural vegetation. Vegetation of India can be divided into five types- tropical evergreen forest, tropical deciduous forest, Thorny bushes, and mountain vegetation and mangrove forests.

### **Tropical Rain Forest:**

Tropical rain forests occur in the areas which receive heavy rainfall. They are so dense that sunlight doesn't reach the ground. Many species of trees are found in these forests, which shed their leaves at different times of the year. Therefore, they always appear green and are called evergreen forest. Trees found in these forests are mahogany, ebony and rosewood. Andaman and Nicobar islands, parts of north-eastern states and a narrow strip of the western slope of the western Ghats are home of these forests.

### **Tropical deciduous forests:**

These forests are also called monsoon forests. They are less dense. They shed their leaves at a particular time of the year. Important trees of these forests are sal, teak, Peepal, neem and shisham. They are found in Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and in parts of Maharashtra.

### **Thorny Bushes:**

This type of vegetation is found in dry areas of the country. The leaves are in the form of spines to reduce the loss of water. Cactus, khair, Babool, keekar are important and are found in the states of Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, eastern slopes of Western Ghats and Gujarat.

### **Mountain vegetation:**

A wide range of species is found in the mountains according to the variation in height. With increase in height, the temperature falls. At a height between 1500 metres and 2500 metres most of the trees are conical in shape. These trees are called coniferous trees. Chir, pine and deodar are important trees of these forests.

### **Mangrove forests:**

These forests can survive in saline water. They are found mainly in sunder bans in west Bengal and in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Sundari is a well-known species of trees in mangrove forests after which sunder bans have been named.

### **Why are forests necessary?**

Forests are very useful for us. They perform various functions. Plants release oxygen that we breathe and absorb carbon dioxide. The roots of the plants bind the soil; thus, they control soil erosion.

Forests provide us with timber for furniture, fuel wood, fodder, medicinal plants and herbs, lac, honey, gum, etc.

Forests are the natural habitat of wild life.



## 6<sup>th</sup> – India: Climate, Vegetation and Wildlife II



### Wild life:

- Forests are home to a variety of wild life. There are thousands of species of animals and a large variety of reptiles, amphibians, mammals, birds, insects and worms which dwell in the forest.
- The tiger is our national animal. It is found in various parts of the country. Gir forest in Gujarat is the home of Asiatic lions.
- India is equally rich in bird life. The peacock is our national bird. There are several bird sanctuaries which have been created to give birds their natural habitat. These provide the birds protection from hunters.
- There are several hundreds of species of snakes found in India. Cobras and kraits are important among them.
- Due to cutting of forests and hunting, several species of wildlife of India are declining rapidly. Many species have already become extinct.
- In order to protect them many national parks, sanctuaries and biosphere reserves have been set up. The government has also started project tiger and project elephant to protect these animals.

