

6th – The Major Land Forms II



The Importance of mountains: Mountains are very useful. The mountains are a storehouse of water. Many rivers have their source in the glaciers in the mountains. Reservoirs are made and the water is harnessed for the use of people. Water from the mountain is also used for irrigation and generation of hydro-electricity. The river valley and terraces are ideal for flora and fauna. The forests provide fuel, shelter and other products like gum, raisins.etc.

Mountains influence the climate of a land. They help cause rain by forcing clouds carrying moisture to rise, condense and come down as rain. Mountains are rich in flora and fauna. The forests provide various products like fuel, timber, lac, nuts, fruits, medicinal herbs and fodder. Many lands are a rich source of minerals. Mountains and their picturesque valleys encourage tourism. They also support sporting activities such as paragliding, rock climbing, hand gliding, river rafting and skiing.

Plateaus: A plateau is an elevated flat land. It is a flat topped table land standing above the surrounding area a plateau may have one or more sides with steep slopes the height of Plateaus often varies from few hundred meters to several thousand metres. Plateaus, like mountains may be young or old.

The Deccan plateau in India is one of the oldest plateaus. The Tibet plateau is the highest plateau in the world with a height of 4,000 to 6,000 metres above the mean sea level. Plateaus are very useful because they are rich in mineral deposits. As a result, many of the mining areas in the world are located in the plateau areas. The African plateau is famous for gold and diamond mining. In India huge reserve of iron, coal and manganese are found in the Chhotanagpur plateau. Plateaus are of different types.

- Intermontane plateaus are those that are surrounded completely or partially by mountains, for example, the plateau of Tibet.
- Continental plateaus are vast areas of tableland that rise abruptly from the coast or surrounding plains, e.g., the plateaus of Africa.
- Lava plateaus are formed when lava flows out of fissures and spreads thickly over extensive areas. The Deccan Plateau is a lava plateau.

The importance of Plateaus

- Lava plateaus, like the Deccan Plateau, are largely composed of black soil, which is very fertile. It is useful for the cultivation of crops.
- Most plateaus have rich deposits of minerals. The Chhota Nagpur Plateau in India has rich deposits of iron ore, manganese and coal.
- The African plateau is rich in gold and diamond deposits.

PLAINS: Plains are large stretches of flat land. They are, generally, not more than 200 metres above mean sea level. Some plains are extremely level. Others may be slightly rolling and undulating.

Formation of Plains: Most of the plains are formed by rivers and their tributaries. The rivers flow down the slopes of mountains and erode them. They carry forward the eroded material. Then they deposit their load consisting of stones, sand and silt along their courses and in their valleys. It is from these deposits that plains are formed.

Plains are the most densely populated regions on Earth. People settle in plains for many reasons.

- Usually water is abundant,



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- The land, being flat and fertile, enables cultivation of crops.
- It is possible to build an excellent network of roads and railways.
- The ports and harbours in coastal plains promote international trade.
- Construction of transport network is easy. Thus, they are the most thickly populated regions of the world.
- In India too, the Indo-Gangetic plains are the most densely populated regions of the country.

LANDFORMS AND THE PEOPLE: Humans have been living on different kinds of landforms in different ways. Life is difficult in mountainous areas. Plains provide much better conditions. It is easy to grow crops, build a house or a road in a plain than a mountain. Sometimes, natural calamities such as earthquakes, volcanic eruption, storms and floods cause widespread destruction. Huge loss of life and property takes place. By creative awareness about such incidences we may lower the risks.

