

# Human Environment Interactions – The Tropical and the Subtropical

Human beings interact with the environment and are dependent on it for a number of things.

## Life in the Amazon Basin

- The Amazon River Basin lies near the equator.
- Amazon river was discovered by a Spanish explorer, Vicente Yanez Pinzon.
- The Amazon basin lies in the tropical region close to the equator between 10°N and 10°S, and the river Amazon flows through this region.
- The Amazon river basin drains portions of Brazil, parts of Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Columbia and a small part of Venezuela.

## Climate

- The Amazon basin stretches directly on the equator and is characterized by hot and wet climate throughout the year.
- There are heavy rainfall and high humidity.

## Rainforest

- As it rains heavily, thick forests grow in this region.
- The forests are in fact so thick that the dense roof created by leaves and branches do not allow the sunlight to reach the ground.
- The rainforest is rich in flora and fauna.
- The basin is home to thousands of species of insects.

## People of the Rainforests

- People grow most of their food in small areas after clearing some trees in the forest.
- Slash and burn agriculture is prevalent.
- The development activities are leading to the gradual destruction of the biologically diverse rainforest.

## Life in the Ganga-Brahmaputra Basin

- The tributaries of rivers Ganga and Brahmaputra together form the Ganga- Brahmaputra basin in the Indian subcontinent.
- The plains of the Ganga and the Brahmaputra, the mountains and foothills of the Himalayas and the Sunderbans delta are the main features of this region.
- The Ganga and Brahmaputra rivers together form the largest delta in the world.

- The basin area has varied topography. The mountain areas with steep slopes have inhospitable terrain.
- Agriculture is the main occupation of the people where flat land is available to grow new crops.
- Wheat, maize sorghum, gram and millets are the important crops of the region.
- The vegetation cover of the area varies according to the type of landforms.
- There is a variety of wildlife in the basin. In the delta areas, Bengal tiger, crocodiles and alligators are found.
- Fish and rice is the staple diet of the people.
- The Ganga-Brahmaputra plain has several big towns and cities like Allahabad, Kanpur, Varanasi, Lucknow, Patna and Kolkata.
- All four means of transport are well-developed in the Ganga-Brahmaputra Basin.
- Tourism is an important activity in the region.

The Amazon Basin lies in the equatorial region. The river Amazon flows through this region. Numerous tributaries join the Amazon river to form the Amazon Basin.

The river basin drains portions of Brazil, parts, of Peru Bolivia, Ecuador, Columbia and a small part of Venezuela.

The climate of the Amazon Basin is hot and wet throughout the year. It rains almost every day. During day time temperatures are high but at night the temperature goes down.

Thick forests are found in the Amazon Basin. As sunlight does not reach the ground, only shade tolerant vegetation grows here, for examples, orchids and bromeliads.

The rainforest is rich in fauna. A variety of birds is found here. Apart from animals like monkeys, sloth, etc. various species of reptiles and snakes are also found in these forests.

The Basin is also the home to thousands of species to insects.

The people of the Amazon Basin are mainly engaged in agriculture. They grow tapioca, pineapple and sweet potato. Their staple food is manioc. They also grow cash crops like coffee, maize and cocoa.

The life of the people of the Amazon basin is slowly changing, in 1970 the Trans-Amazon highway made all parts of the rainforest accessible. Aircraft and helicopters are also used for reaching various places.

Due to these developmental activities, a large area of the rainforest has been disappearing annually in the Amazon Basin.

Life in the Ganga-Brahmaputra Basin

- The tributaries of rivers Ganga and Brahmaputra together form the Ganga-Brahmaputra Basin in the Indian subcontinent.
- The plains of the Ganga and the Brahmaputra, the mountains and the foothills of the Himalayas and the Sundarbans delta are the main features of this basin.

- The area of the basin enjoys a monsoon climate. The summers are hot and the winters cool.
- The basin area has a varied topography. The mountain areas of the basin have thin population. The plain area has thick population.
- Agriculture is the chief occupation of the people. The main crop is paddy. Some other crops like the wheat, maize, grain, millets etc. and some cash crops like sugarcane and jute are also grown.
- Tropical deciduous trees grow in the Ganga, Brahmaputra plain. Teak, sal and peepal are also found. The delta is covered with mangrove forests.
- The basin is rich in wildlife. A variety of fish is found here. Fish and rice is the staple food of the people living in the area.
- Several big towns and cities such as Allahabad, Kanpur, Varanasi, Lucknow, Patna and Kolkata are there in the Ganga-Brahmaputra plain.
- All four means of transport are available here.
- Tourism is also an important activity of the basin. Tourists from different parts of the world come to see the Taj Mahal, Buddhists stupas, Imambara, wildlife sanctuaries etc.

**Mouth:** The place where a river flows into another body of water is known as the river's mouth.

**Tributaries:** These are small rivers that join the main river.

**Bromeliads:** These are special plants that store water in their leaves.

**Slash and Burn Agriculture:** It is a type of cultivation in which farmers clear a patch of land by cutting down trees and bushes. These are then burnt which releases the nutrients into the soil. Now the field becomes ready for growing crops.

**Manioc:** This is the staple food of the people of the Amazon basin.

**Maloca:** Large apartment like houses with steeply slanting roofs are called malocas.

**Population Density:** It refers to the number of persons that live in one sq. km. of area.

**Terrace Farming:** It is a type of farming in which terraces are built on steep slopes to create flat surfaces on which crops are grown. The slope is removed so that water does not run off rapidly.

**Piranha:** It is a type of fish that eats flesh.