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GEO-GLOSSARY

ICSE GEOGRAPHY

Class 9

Chapter 18: Natural Regions of the World

The division of the world into the natural regions is as under:

1. The **tropical region** includes the equatorial region, the tropical grasslands, the tropical monsoon region and the tropical deserts.
2. The **subtropical region** includes the Mediterranean region and the China type region.
3. The **temperate region** includes the cool temperate west coast region, the temperate grasslands and the temperate deserts.
4. The **polar region** includes the taiga region and the tundra region.

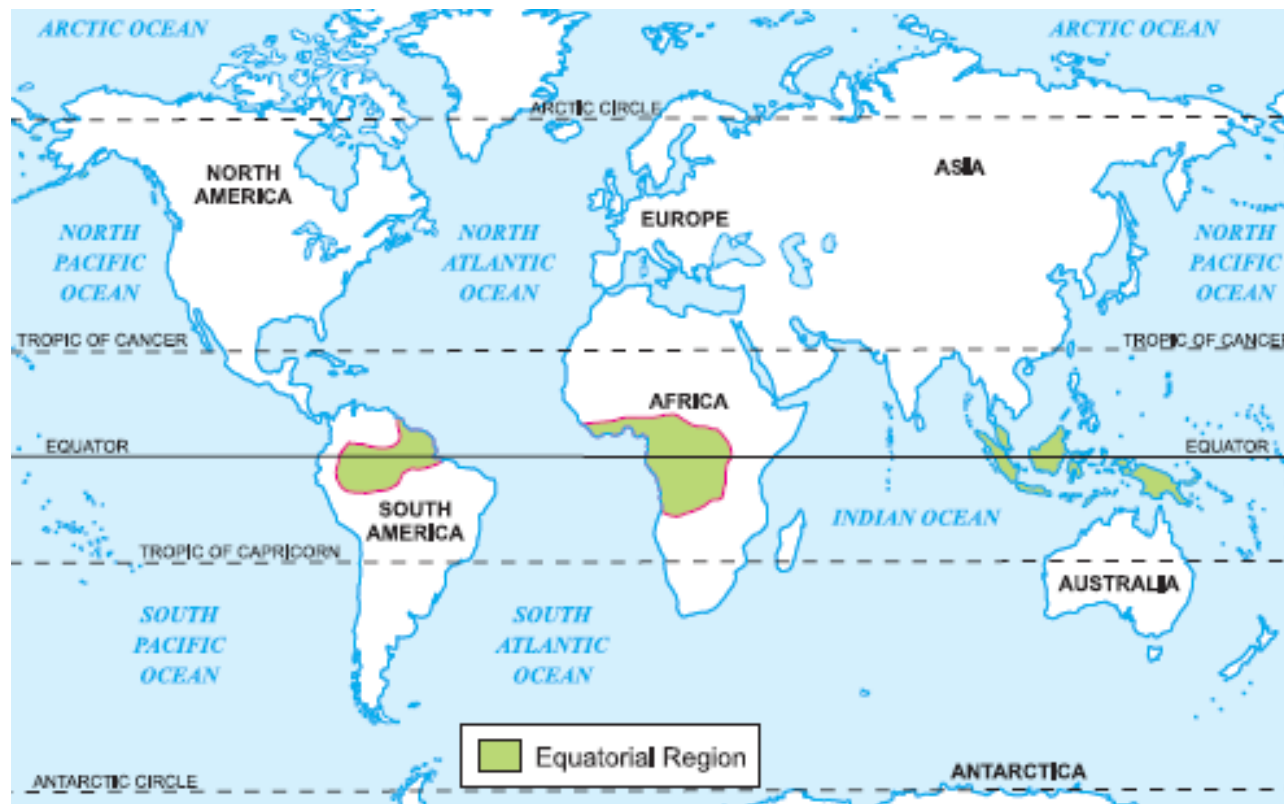
EQUATORIAL REGION

Location and Area

The equatorial region includes the area on both sides of the equator in a belt extending between 10° N and 10° S latitudes. It includes the Amazon lowlands of South America, the Congo basin and the Guinea coast in equatorial Africa, south-east Asian islands, and some islands in the Caribbean Sea.

Climatic Conditions

- ❖ The equatorial region experiences uniformly high temperature almost throughout the year. The average annual temperature is about 27 °C and the annual range of temperature is only 3 °C.
- ❖ The high humidity produces sultry weather conditions, which are harmful for health.
- ❖ The rainfall is heavy and well distributed almost throughout the year. The average annual rainfall is about 250 cm and there is no dry season in the year. The rainfall, being **convectioanl** in nature, is accompanied by thunder and lightning.



World – The equatorial region

Natural Vegetation

- ❖ The hot and humid climate helps in the luxuriant growth of trees, creepers, bushes and orchids.
- ❖ The forests have the largest number of plant species, say about 40 to 100 in one hectare of land.
- ❖ There are small plants forming a second layer, and a thick undergrowth of bushes.
- ❖ The main trees found in these forests are **mahogany, rosewood, ebony, cinchona, rubber, coconut palm, cane, bamboos**, etc.
- ❖ The trees yield valuable hardwood, which is widely used in the making of costly furniture.

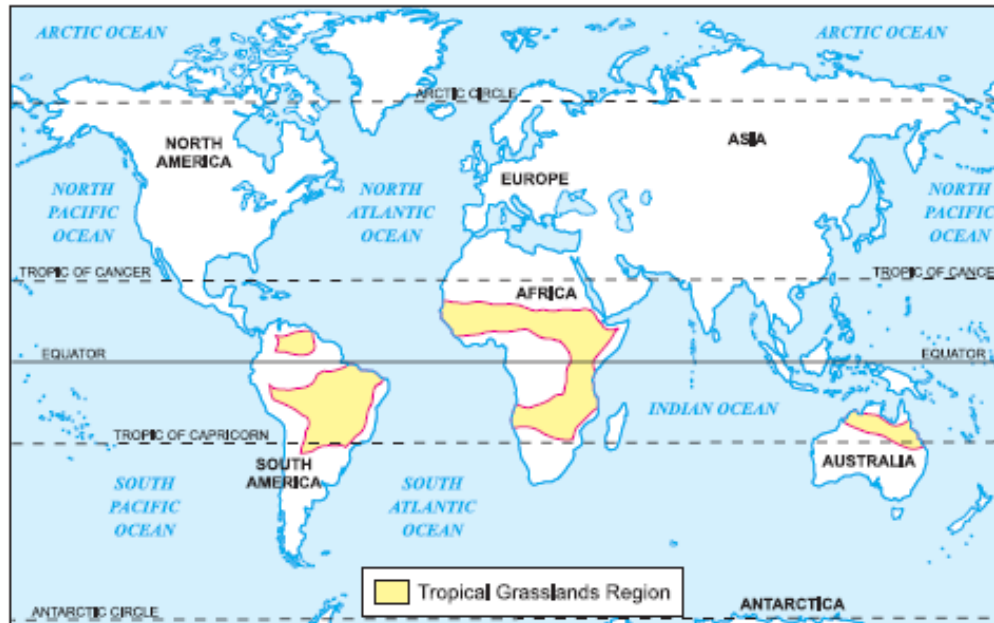
Human Adaptation

The dense forests have remained inaccessible except along navigable rivers. The equatorial region has red and yellow soils of low fertility, as they get leached by heavy rainfall. The human settlements are small and scattered. Malaria, yellow fever and other tropical diseases are widespread. The Amazon Basin (also called Selvas) in South America and the Congo Basin in Africa are inhabited by the tribals.

TROPICAL GRASSLANDS

Location and Area

The tropical grasslands (also called **Savanna**) are found in the interior of continents in the tropical belt. It forms a zone of transition between the hot and humid equatorial region and the hot and dry lands of tropical deserts. These grasslands are mainly located between 5° and 20° north and south of the equator. The tropical grasslands are found mainly in South America, Africa and Australia.



World – The tropical grasslands region

Climatic Conditions

There are distinct wet and dry seasons. The mean temperature is high throughout the year, i.e. between 24 °C and 32 °C. The humidity is low and the air is hot, dry and dusty.

There are three main seasons:

1. The **cold dry season** has high day temperature (26 ° C to 32 ° C), but relatively low temperature at night, usually 20 ° C.
2. The **warm dry season** experiences vertical sunrays and high temperature (32 ° C to 38 ° C) due to abundant insolation.
3. The **warm wet season** receives about 80 per cent of the total rainfall.

Natural Vegetation

The coarse tall grass, which grows to a height of about 3 m, is the typical vegetation of Savanna or tropical grasslands. The rainfall is neither sufficient nor well distributed to support the growth of tall trees. There are actually three distinct layers of vegetation in the Savanna grasslands.

1. The **ground layer** has coarse, stiff and hard grasses having height ranging between 1 m to 3 m. The **elephant grass** can be 5 m tall.
2. The **middle layer** consists of shrubs and stunted woody plants.
3. The **canopy layer** is formed by the trees of various types.

Human Adaptation

The people in the tropical grasslands are engaged in various occupations, such as cattle rearing, hunting, agriculture and trading. Though the region is mainly pastoral, but cultivation is increasing in every part of tropical grasslands.

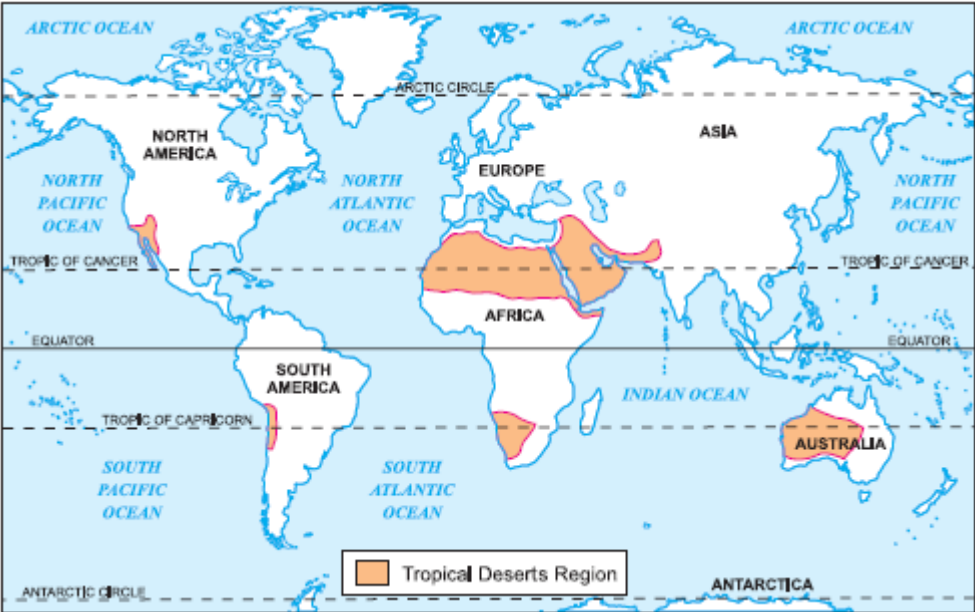
Some natives lead a settled life and work on plantations. The rainy season is the growing season and the dry season is the harvest time in the tropical grasslands.

- ❖ The main crops produced in Africa are **cotton, sugarcane, tobacco, groundnut, millets** and **maize**.
- ❖ Cattle rearing on commercial scale is becoming important in South America. The **Llanos** also have great cattle ranches in South America.
- ❖ The other crops grown are **peas, beans** and **sweet potatoes**.

TROPICAL DESERTS

Location and Area

- ❖ Tropical deserts are located on the western margins of the continents, between 15° and 30° latitudes in both the hemispheres.
- ❖ They lie in the subtropical high pressure belt and include some of the driest areas on the Earth.



World – The tropical deserts

- ❖ In the Northern Hemisphere, the Afro-Asian deserts form the longest belt, which includes the Sahara, Arabia and Thar deserts.

Climatic Conditions

The main feature of desert climate is the shortage of water and very high insolation. It is due to the following reasons:

- a. The trade winds give enough rainfall on the eastern margins of the continents, but as they reach the western margins they become dry.
- b. The ground temperature is so high that the raindrops are evaporated before they reach the ground surface.
- c. The influence of the cold ocean currents along the west coast of the continents.



Tropical desert

Natural Vegetation

- ❖ The climate in deserts is not conducive for the growth of vegetation due to the shortage of water.
- ❖ Thus most of these regions are either devoid of vegetation or have sparse and bushy vegetation.
- ❖ The plants have their own moisture conserving devices such as long roots, thick barks, waxy leaves, thorns and small leaves, so that they may avoid **evapotranspiration**.
- ❖ The main trees or bushes found in this region are **acacia, cactus, date palm, kikar, babul**, etc.

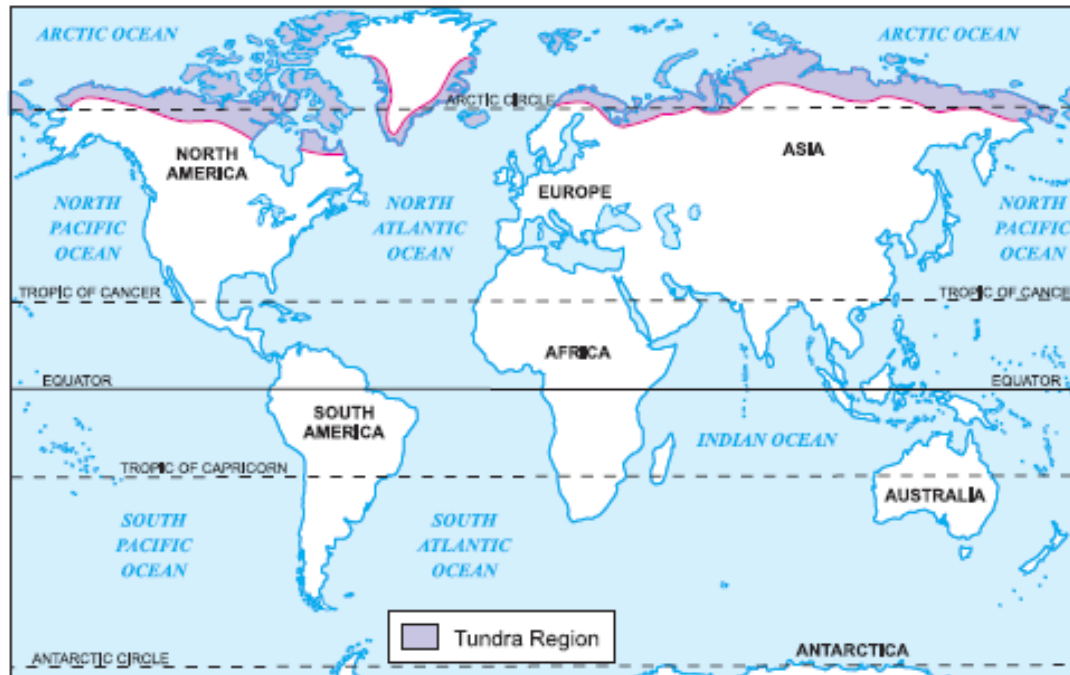
Human Adaptation

- ❖ The tropical desert areas are agriculturally unproductive due to the shortage of water.
- ❖ The cultivation is mainly confined to **oasis** where it is carried on through irrigation either from streams or from underground sources.
- ❖ **Millet**s, **pulses**, **maize**, **beans**, **cotton**, **tobacco** and **fruits** are the main crops. **Date palms** are also widely grown.

TUNDRA REGION

Location and Area

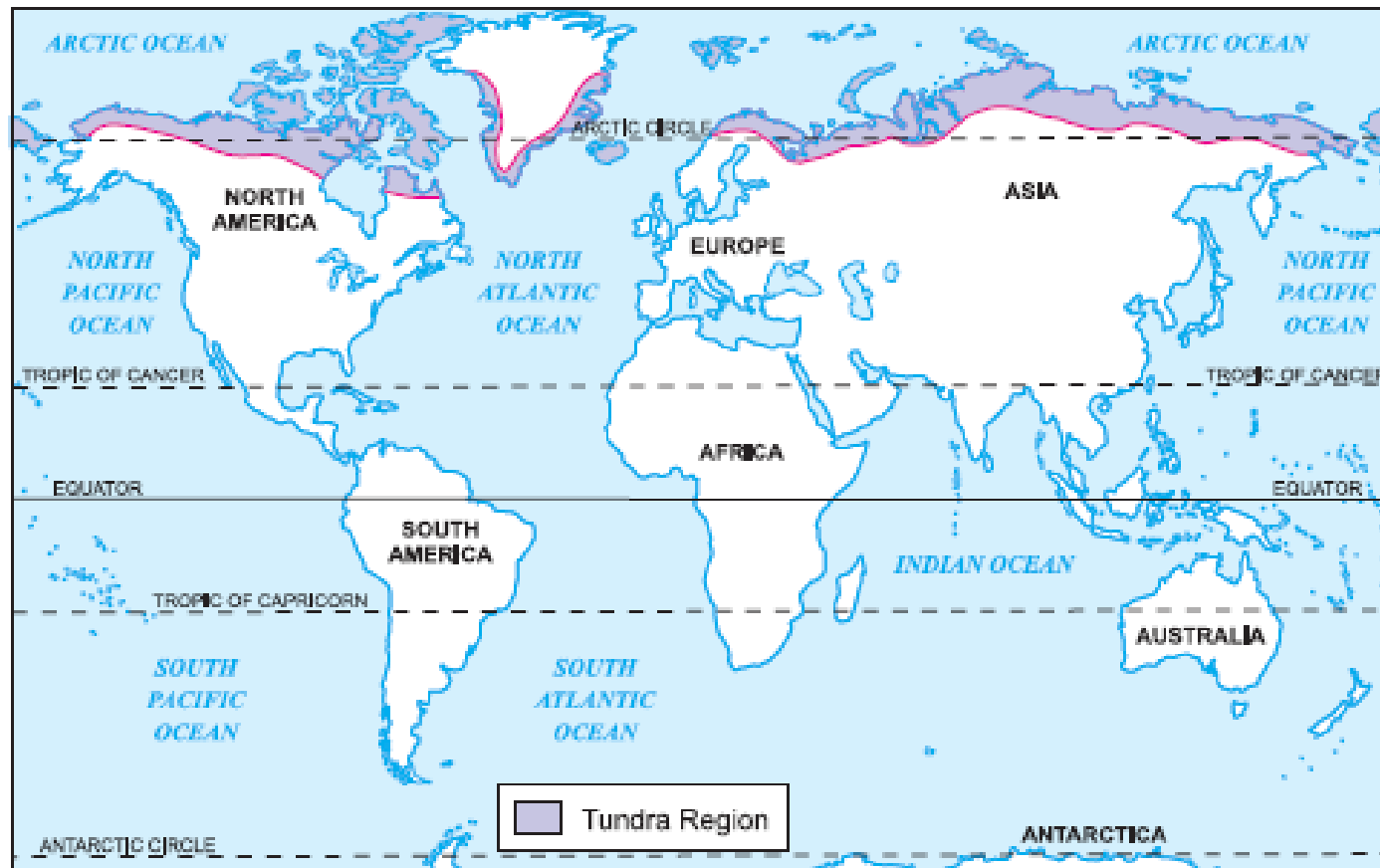
- ❖ Tundra is a **Finnish** word which means **barren land**.
- ❖ The tundra region is a vast lowland, lying along the shores of the Arctic Ocean.
- ❖ It lies beyond the Arctic Circle ($66\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}\text{N}$) in the Northern Hemisphere and includes the extreme northern parts of North America, Europe and Asia.



World – The tundra region

Climatic Conditions

- ❖ The main features of the climate in the tundra region is the general absence of insolation, and very low temperature throughout the year. The average annual temperature is about $-12\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$.
- ❖ The winters are long and bitterly cold, while the summers are short and cool. The temperature during the summer season varies between $2\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ and $10\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$. The warmest month is June.
- ❖ The ground surface is covered with snow for at least 8 to 9 months in a year. The region experiences cold storms known as blizzards. The ground is permanently frozen (**permafrost**).



World – The tundra region

Natural Vegetation

The plant cover in the tundra region is extremely limited due to the extreme cold weather and absence of minimum amount of insolation. The vegetation is sparse due to short growing season and severe frost, which also occurs during the summer season.

Most of the plants are tufted in form and range in height between 5 cm and 8 cm. **Moss and lichen** grow here as they can withstand freezing temperature. The evergreen flowering plants blossom on the ground during the short cool summers. They occur in scattered patches and provide pastures for **reindeers**.

Human Adaptation

The extremely cold climatic conditions do not encourage permanent settlements. The Inuits or **Eskimos** of North America, the **Lapps** of Scandinavia, the **Samoyeds** and **Yakuts** of Siberia used to lead a nomadic life. Hunting and fishing were their main occupations. They also traded in fur and other animal products.

Now many of them live in permanent wooden houses having all modern amenities. Reindeer farms have been established in Russia. Glass houses have been set up for the cultivation of vegetables to meet the needs of local population.



Eskimos of North America



Yakuts of Siberia

**THANK
YOU**