
Chapter 6

Major Landforms of the earth

❖ Landforms

- Landforms are a result of various processes on the earth.
- The internal processes take place in the form of continuous movements within the earth.
- They lead to the upliftment and sinking of the earth's surface at different places.
- External processes cause the wearing down and rebuilding of the earth's surface through erosion and deposition.
- The agents of external processes are running water, ice and wind.
- Landforms are divided as mountains, plateaus and plains on the basis of elevation and slope.

❖ The three landforms

- Mountains
 - Mountains are the natural elevations of earth's surface with a broad base, steep slopes and a small summit.
 - Some mountains have permanent frozen rivers of ice called glaciers.
 - Mountains are mostly arranged in a linear form called range.
 - The harsh climate and topography of mountains is not ideal for human settlement and agriculture.
 - The three types of mountains on the basis of their formations are fold mountains, block mountains and volcanic mountains.
- Fold Mountains
 - Fold Mountains are formed by the process of folding of landforms.
 - They have high conical peaks and rugged relief.
 - Himalayan mountains and the Alps are young fold mountains.
 - Aravali range in India is the oldest fold mountain in the world that has been worn down by erosion.
- Block Mountains
 - Block mountains are formed when large areas are broken and displaced vertically in the form of blocks.
 - The uplifted blocks and lowered blocks are known as horsts and graben respectively.
 - The Rhine Valley and the Vosges Mountain in Europe are examples of block mountains.
- Volcanic Mountains

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- Volcanic Mountains are formed due to volcanic activities.
 - Examples of volcanic mountains are Mt. Kilimanjaro in Africa and Mt. Fujiyama in Japan.
 - Advantages
 - Mountain glaciers are the source of many rivers that are harnessed, used for irrigation and for the generation of hydro-electricity.
 - The river valleys and terraces are good for cultivation.
 - Mountains have forests that are rich in flora, fauna, minerals and other products.
 - Mountains are tourist spots and suitable for adventurous sports.
 - Plateaus
 - Plateaus are elevated flat table lands with height varying from a few hundred meters to several thousand meters.
 - The Tibetan plateau is the highest plateau in the world with a height of 4000 to 6000 meters above the mean sea level.
 - Plateau regions are rich in minerals and black soil that is good for cultivation.
 - Waterfalls also occur on the plateaus.
 - Plateaus have scenic spots which encourage tourism.
 - Plains
 - Plains are large stretches of flat land which are generally not more than 200 meters above mean sea level.
 - Plains are formed due to deposition of sediments and eroded materials by rivers.
 - The level topography of plains encourages human settlement, transportation and construction of houses.
 - The soil in the plains is very fertile and good for cultivation.
 - Plains formed by River Ganga and Brahmaputra in India and by River Yangtze in China are examples of largest plains formed by rivers.