

Class 12 Geography Notes Chapter 5 Primary Activities

Hunting and Gathering

- Hunting and gathering are the oldest primitive activities of man. Early man lived in forests and sustained his life by hunting animals. He has also been gathering various products from the forests to satisfy his needs in early days. Thus, early men sustained on edible plants which they hunted and edible plants which they gathered from the forests.
- Early human beings practised these activities with the help of primitive tools, made of stones, twigs or arrows, so the number of animals killed was limited. But now modern equipments led to the widespread poaching of animals due to which hunting is declared illegal.
- Gathering is practised in high latitude zones of North Canada, Northern Eurasia and Southern Chile, low latitude zones of Amazon Basin, tropical Africa, interiors of South-East Asia. This activity requires small capital investment and low level of technology. Valuable plants, leaves, bark, etc are collected and after simple processing they are sold in local markets. These products cannot compete the world market as synthetic products are lower in price and of better quality.

Pastoralism

This means domestication and rearing of animals on pastures. This is carried either at subsistence level known as nomadic herding or at commercial level known as commercial livestock rearing.

Nomadic Herding

- Also called pastoral nomadism, it is a primitive activity where herders move with their livestock from one place to another in search of food and water. They rely on animals for food, clothing, shelter, tools and transport.
- Depending on geographical factors different animals are reared in different regions like cattle in tropical Africa, sheep, goat and camel in Sahara, Asiatic deserts, Yak, llamas in Tibet and Andes, reindeer in Arctic and Sub-Arctic areas. Other areas include Mongolia, Central China, Eurasia, South-West Africa and Madagascar.

Commercial Livestock Rearing

- This practise is associated with western culture, it is more organised and capital intensive. This activity is done on vast ranches that are permanent.

Transhumance

This is the process of migration from plain areas to mountains during summers and from mountains to plain areas during winters. The tribes of Bakarwals, Gaddis, Bhotiyas, Gujjars of Himalayas and nomadic herders of Tundra region do transhumance.

- Modern scientific technology with emphasis on breeding, genetic improvement, disease control and health care is done. Production of meat, wool, hides is done and exported to different world markets.
- Sheep, cattle, goat and horses are reared in the ranches. Australia, New- Zealand, Argentina, Uruguay, South-West Africa, Western United States and Central Asia are major centers of commercial livestock rearing.

Agriculture

Agriculture is practised under multiple combinations of physical and socio- economic conditions, which gives rise to different types of agriculture systems.

Based on methods of farming, different type of crops are grown and livestock raised. The following are the main agricultural systems:

Subsistence Agriculture

In this type of agriculture, farmers consume all or nearly all of the produce as the size of the farm is very small. It can be divided into primitive subsistence agriculture and intensive subsistence agriculture.

Primitive Subsistence Agriculture This is widely practised in tropical areas of Africa/South, Central America and South-East Asia. Different names are given to it in different places like Milpa, Jhuming, Ladang. It is also called slash and burn agriculture or shifting agriculture. Cultivation is done through primitive tools by clearing a patch of land. After 3 to 5 years, when the soil loses its fertility then new land is cleared for cultivation.

Intensive Subsistence Agriculture This type of agriculture is practised in densely populated regions of monsoon Asia. This type of cultivation is either dominated by wet paddy cultivation and crops other than paddy. The per unit area is high but productivity is low as land holdings are small due to high density of population, less use of machines, family labour involved and farm yard manures are used. Crops other than paddy are wheat, soybean, barley, sorghum grown in Northern China, Manchuria, North Korea and Japan. In India, it is practised in Indo-Gangetic plains, dry parts of Western and Southern India.

Plantation Agriculture

This type of agriculture was introduced by the Europeans like cocoa and coffee in West Africa by French, Tea in India and Sri Lanka, rubber in Malaysia, sugarcane and banana in West Indies by British, coconut, sugarcane in Philippines by Spanish, etc.

Here, agriculture is done on large estates or plantations, requires huge capital investment and scientific methods of cultivation.

Extensive Commercial Grain Cultivation

- This is practised in the interiors of semi-arid parts of mid latitudes like Eurasian steppes, Canadian and American Prairies, Pampas of Argentina, velds of South Africa, Australian Downs and Canterbury plains of New Zealand.

- Crops like wheat, corn, barley, oats and rye are grown. Agriculture is mechanised as farms are very large. There is low yield per acre but high yield per person.

Mixed Farming

- This is practised in North-Western Europe, Eastern-North America, parts of Eurasia and temperate latitudes of Southern continents. Here crop cultivation along with animal husbandry is practised. Crops like wheat, barley, oats, rye, maize, fodder and root crops along with the rearing of farm animals like cattle, sheep, pig, poultry is done to provide extra income.
- There is crop rotation and inter cropping along with high capital expenditure on farm inputs.

Dairy Farming

- It is practised near urban and industrial centers of North-Western Europe, Canada, South-Eastern Australia, New Zealand and Tasmania. It is highly capital intensive due to cost of feeding, milching machines, animal sheds, storage facilities, veterinary services, etc.
- It is also labour intensive as rigorous care of animals is also needed. There is no off season during the year as in case of crop raising.

Mediterranean Agriculture

It is practised on either side of Mediterranean in Europe, North Africa from Tunisia to Atlantic coast, Southern-California, some parts of Chile, South-Western parts of South Africa and South-Western parts of Australia. It is highly specialised commercial agriculture and important supplier of citrus fruits.

Viticulture

This refers to cultivation of grapes in the Mediterranean regions. Inferior grapes are made into raisins and currants while superior grapes are processed into wines. Figs and olives are also cultivated.

Market Gardening and Horticulture

- It is practised in highly developed and industrial regions of North-West Europe, North-East United States and Mediterranean regions. Netherlands specialises in cultivation of Tulip flowers.
- This type of cultivation refers to high value crops like vegetables, fruits and flowers solely for urban markets. Farms are small and mechanised. It is both capital and labour intensive.

Truck Farming

This refers to the specialisation in the cultivation of vegetables only. The distance between the farms and urban markets can be covered through trucks overnight, hence its name is known as 'truck farming.'

Factory Farming

This refers to livestock rearing mainly poultry and cattle. This is capital intensive, requires maintenance, supervision and scientific breeding. It is practised in industrial regions of Europe and North America.

Co-operative Farming

Under this farming group of farmers form a co-operative society by pooling their resources voluntarily for more efficient and profitable farming. There is help from societies in buying and selling farm products. Individual farms remain intact. It is practised in Denmark, Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden and Italy.

Collected Farming

- It is based on social ownership of the means of production and collective labour. Here farmers pool their resources, though they are allowed to keep a small part with themselves.
- Produce is sold to state at prefixed prices. Members paid according to the nature of work done. It was practised first in Kelkhoz in erstwhile Soviet Union.

Mining

It refers to the extraction of mineral resources from the Earth. Its development began with the industrial revolution.

Factors affecting Mining Activity

There are two factors that affect the mining activity. These are:

1. Physical factors related to size, grade and mode of occurrence of the deposits.
2. Economic factors related to demand for mineral, technology, capital to develop infrastructure, labour and transport cost.

Methods of Mining

It is of two types i.e. surface and underground mining. Surface of open cast mining occurs close to the surface, it is easiest and cheapest. The other is underground mining in which minerals are extracted from very deep mines using vertical shafts. It requires lifts, drills and very efficient technology.

The developed economies are retreating from mining due to high labour cost while developing economies are becoming major exporters of minerals due to their large labour force and striving for better standard of living.