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Chapter 6

North America: Climate Vegetation

and Wildlife

Good Morning Students:

Today we will study about Climate, Vegetation and Wildlife of North America

(1) Introduction:

- North America extends from Tropical Zone in the South to Frigid Zone in the North.
- The Climate varies from tropical type in South to Tundra type in the North.
- Major part of North America lies in temperate Zone.
- Central America, West Indies and Mexico experience tropical Climate.

(2) Factors affecting climate:

(A) Size of Continent:

- North America is so vast that many parts are far away from Sea.
- The places close to the Sea have a low range of temperature and experience maritime Climate.
- The places located far away from Sea experience continental Climate.

(B) Direction of Mountain Ranges:

- The Appalachian Mountains and the Rocky Mountains extend along the eastern and western coast of North America.
- Both these mountains obstruct the oceanic influence of Pacific and Atlantic Ocean.
- Since there is no mountain range in the north, In winters, the cold wind coming from polar areas brings cold waves as far as South of Gulf of Mexico.
- During summer, the areas lying in the temperate latitude are influenced by warm winds from the Tropic Zone.

### (c) Ocean Currents:

- It has an effect on temperature and rainfall of the coastal areas.
- Warm Gulf Stream increases the temperature of eastern coast of North America. On the other hand, Alaska Current increases the temperature of western coast of North America.
- Cold Labrador Current lowers the temperature of south-east coast and California Current lowers the temperature of south-west coast.
- The warm Gulf Stream and cold Labrador Current mix near Newfoundland and makes this area one of the important fishing ground.

### (d) Prevailing Winds:

- The South Westerlies and the North-East Trade winds are rain-bearing winds adequate rainfall in North America.
- The South Westerlies blow over the Pacific and bring rain throughout the year to the North-western side.
- The North-East Trade winds bring heavy rainfall to the South-eastern coast of North America during summer.

### (3) Distribution of Rainfall:

#### (a) Areas receiving 100 cm of rainfall:

Central America, North-west Pacific Coast, coastal areas, lower Mississippi Basin and West Indies.

#### (b) Areas receiving 50 to 100 cm of rainfall:

Rocky Mountains and eastern belt of Canada.

#### (c) Areas receiving 25 to 50 cm of rainfall:

Western half of continent, Great Plains and western part of Praries.

#### (d) Areas receiving less than 25 cm of rainfall:

adjoining areas of Mexico and south western parts of U.S.A.