The Coastal plains of India

Coastal plains are defined as the geographical region near the sea, as the name suggests. The narrow coastal strip between the Peninsular Plateau and the coastline of India starting from Rann of Kuchch in the west to the Ganga-Brahmaputra delta in the east is defined as the coastal region. It is about six thousand kilometers in length. According to their location they are divided into two parts.

1. East coastal plains
2. West coastal plains

The area between Eastern Ghats and the coast of the Bay of Bengal is known as Eastern Coastal Plain. The area between Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea is known as Western Coastal Plain. The two coastal plains meet at the southernmost tip of India which is Kanyakumari. The two coastal plains have their own significance in India’s economy, growth and development.

Eastern coastal plains

It starts from the north side formed by Subarnarekha River and extends till southernmost tip of India i.e. Kanyakumari. It is about 150 km. in length and 120 km. in width. Eastern coastal plains are wider as compared to the Western coastal plains. Many rivers like Mahanadi, Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri drain these plains. Their deltas cover about 25% of eastern coastal plains. The biggest delta is formed by Mahanadi namely Chillika Lake. Krishna River is very fertile and is known as the ‘Granary of the South India’.

Depending upon the location these plains are further divided into two parts.

1. Northern Circars- constituting northern plains of eastern coastal plains
2. Coromandel Coast- constituting southern plains of eastern coastal plains

Due to tilting of Peninsular Plateau towards east all rivers except Narmada and Tapti flow eastwards, forming large and vast deltas here. Due to this, this region is highly fertile and densely populated. There are several lakes along the coast. Some of the largest lakes are found here like Lake Chillika in Orissa which is the biggest lake of India. Kolleru and Pulicat lakes in Andhra Pradesh are also some famous lakes.

A chain of bars is also found along the coast which gives rise to lagoons. Sriharikota Island, India’s satellite launching station of the Indian Space Research Organization is also located at Pulicat Lake of Chennai. Pulicat Lake is also a part of eastern coastal line. The most important part of this region is the Cauvery delta which provides large irrigation facilities and fertile soil.

The eastern coast is sandy with alluvium soil. Sand dunes and marshy lands are also found here. The coast line is generally smooth. Thus, it is not fit for construction of ports. The eastern coastal plains receive less rain fall as compared to western coastal plain.

Western coastal plains

This region spreads from the area of the Rann of Kuchch in the north to Kanyakumari in the south having width of 65 km. It is narrow in the middle and a bit broader at the north and south region. According to its location, it is further divided into three parts:-

1 Konkan Coast- it is the northern part of the plain that stretch between Mumbai and Goa
2 Kannad Plain- the central stretch
3 Malabar Coast- the southern stretch

Western coast is rocky with sand dunes. There is no lagoon. But there are many estuaries on the Konkan coast. The Malabar Coast has beautiful scenery of country’s back-water with a series of lagoons.
Short swift rivers do not make any deltas here. They directly drain into Arabian Sea. Western Ghats are continuous and can be crossed through passes only. This area is higher than the Eastern Ghats. The Western Ghats cause orographic rain by facing the rain bearing moist winds to rise along the western slopes of the Ghats. They are known by different local names. The Aravali hills also lie on the western and northwestern margins of the peninsula plateau. The famous Jog falls or Gersoppa is the highest water fall of India. The waterfall lies to the east of this plain. The height of this falls is 275 meters. Western coastal line is broken and indented. Due to this reason, it's fit for the construction of ports. Large number of ports are constructed which are very beneficial for our country's economy. Western coastal plain is not fertile except Malabar Coast due to coarse grained soil.

Significance of coastal plains
1. Indian coastal plains especially eastern coastal plains have rich fertile soil which is fit to grow crops like rice, coconut tree etc. The coastal plains are noted for their specialized crops of spices pepper, ginger and cardamom.
2. A large number of ports are formed on western coastal plains due to intended coastal line. About 98% of international trade is carried through these ports. They play a great role in the growth of national and international trade.
3. In some areas of coastal plains mineral oil deposits are also found.
4. The sand along Kerala’s coast have large reserves of monazite which is used for producing nuclear power.
5. The marshy low lying areas of Gujarat are fit for producing common salt throughout the year except rainy season.
6. The large coastal line of India makes it fit for fishing also.
7. The coast line has a large number of holiday spots which attracts tourists also like Goa, Chennai, Mumbai, Orissa etc.
8. The coastline of India provides strategic location for Indian navy to monitor the international seas for any suspicious activities from smugglers or from the enemy nations. Our neighbours in the sea like China, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and
Maldives also share international seas with us which makes it necessary for the navy to monitor our borders.

9. Due to the suitable climatic conditions in the coastal regions, population density is very high here.

Conclusion

The coastal plains of India constitute one very important landform for India. They are very integral to the flourishing of our economy. The trade and economy boost that the location of coastal plains provides us, is important to the location of India and the triangular shape of our country in the south is even more advantageous to India.

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