

Fundamental of Physical Geography

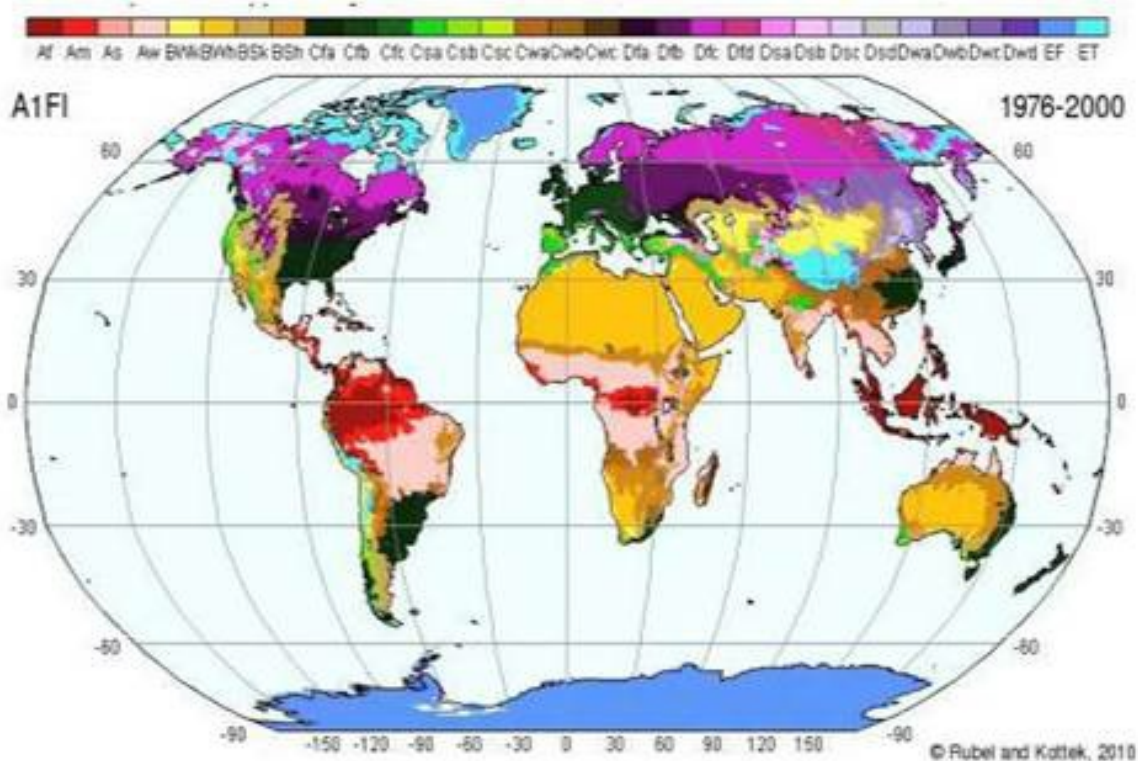
Chapter-12 World Climate and Climate Change

This chapter deals with : The world climate can be studied by organizing information and data on climate and synthesizing them in smaller units for easy understanding, description and analysis. Three broad approaches have been adopted for classifying climate. They are empirical, genetic and applied. Empirical classification is based on observed data, particularly on temperature and precipitation. Genetic classification attempts to organize climates according to their causes. Applied classification is for specific purpose.

Koeppen's Scheme of classification of climate



Koeppen



The most widely used classification of climate is the empirical climate classification scheme developed by V. Koeppen. Koeppen identified a close relationship between the distribution of vegetation and climate. He selected certain values of temperature and precipitation and related them to the distribution of vegetation and used these values for classifying the climates.

It is an empirical classification based on mean annual and mean monthly temperature and precipitation data. He introduced the use of capital and small letters to designate climatic groups and types. Although developed in 1918 and modified over a period of time, Koeppen’s scheme is still popular and in use. He recognized five major climatic groups, four of them are based on temperature and one on precipitation. Table 12.1 lists the climatic groups and their characteristics according to Koeppen.

The capital letters: A, C, D and E delineate humid climates and B dry climates.

The climatic groups are subdivided into types, designated by small letters, based on seasonality of precipitation and temperature characteristics.

The seasons of dryness are indicated by the small letters : f, m, w and s, where f corresponds to no dry season,

According to Koeppen : Table 12.1: Climate Groups

Group	Characteristics
A – Tropical	Average temperature of the coldest month is 18 C or higher
B - Dry Climates	Potential evaporation exceeds precipitation
C - Warm Temperate	The average temperature of the coldest month of the (Mid-latitude) climates years is higher than minus 3oC but below 18oC
D - Cold Snow Forest Climates	The average temperature of the coldest month is minus 3° C or below
E - Cold Climates	Average temperature for all months is below 10’ C
H - High Land	Cold due to elevation

m - monsoon climate, w- winter dry season and s - summer dry season.

The small letters a, b, c and d refer to the degree of severity of temperature.

The B- Dry Climates are subdivided using the capital letters S for steppe or semi-arid and W

for deserts.

According to Koeppen Table : 12.2: Climate Types

Group	Type	Letter code	Characteristics
A -Tropical Humid Climate	Tropical wet Tropical monsoon Tropical wet and dry	Af Am Aw	No dry season Monsoonal, short dry season Winter dry season
B-dry climate	Subtropical steppe Subtropical desert Subtropical steppe Mid-laltitude desert	BSH BWH BSK BWK	Low-latitude semi arid or dry Low-latitude arid or dry Mid-latitude arid or dry
C-Warm temperate (Mid-latitude) Climates	Humid subtropical Mediterranean Marine west coast	Cfa Cs Cfb	No dry season, warm summer Dry hot summer No dry season, warm and cool summer
D-cold snow forest Climate	Humid continental Subractic	Df Dw	No dry season. Severe winter Winter dry and very severe
E-cold climate	Tundra Polar ice cap	ET EF	No true Perennial ice
H-highland	Highland	H	Highland with snow cover

Group A: Tropical Humid Climates

1. Tropical humid climates exist between Tropic of Cancer and Tropic of Capricorn.
2. Annual range of temperature is very low and annual rainfall is high.
3. The tropical group is divided into three types, namely
 - i. Af- Tropical wet climate;
 - ii. Am - Tropical monsoon climate;
 - iii. Aw- Tropical wet and dry climate.
4. The sun being overhead throughout the year and the presence of Inter Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) make the climate hot and humid.

Tropical Wet Climate (Af) :



1. Tropical wet climate is found near the equator.
2. The maximum temperature on any day is around 30 C while the minimum temperature is around 20C.
3. Significant amount of rainfall occurs in every month of the year as thunder showers in the afternoon.
4. The major areas are the Amazon Basin in South America, western equatorial Africa and the islands of East Indies.
5. The temperature is uniformly high and the annual range of temperature is negligible.
6. Tropical evergreen forests with dense canopy cover and large biodiversity are found in this climate

Tropical Monsoon Climate (Am) :





Tropical monsoon climate (Am) is found over the Indian sub-continent, North Eastern part of south America and Northern Australia. Heavy rainfall occurs mostly in summer. Winter is dry.

Tropical Wet and Dry Climate (Aw)



- Tropical wet and dry climate occurs north and south of Af type climate regions.
- Extensive Aw climate is found to the north and south of the Amazon forest in Brazil and adjoining parts of Bolivia and Paraguay in South America, Sudan and south of Central Africa.
- The wet season is shorter and the dry season is longer with the drought being more severe.
- Temperature is high throughout the year and diurnal ranges of temperature are the greatest in the dry season.

Dry Climates: B



- Dry climates are characterized by very low rainfall that is not adequate for the growth of plants.
- These climates cover a very large area of the planet extending over large latitudes from 15 - 60 north and south of the equator.
- At low latitudes, from 15 - 30° they occur in the area of subtropical high where subsidence and inversion of temperature do not produce rainfall.
- Dry climates are divided into steppe or semi-arid climate (BS) and desert climate (BW).
- They are further subdivided as subtropical steppe (BSh) and subtropical desert (BWh) at latitudes from 15° - 35° and mid-latitude steppe (BSk) and mid-latitude desert (BWk) at latitudes between 35° - 60°.
- Subtropical Steppe (BSh) and Subtropical Desert (BWh) Climates Subtropical steppe (BSh) and subtropical desert (BWh) have common precipitation and temperature characteristics.
- The rainfall in both the climates is highly variable.
- The variability in the rainfall affects the life in the steppe much more than in the desert, more often causing famine.
- Fog is common in coastal deserts bordering cold currents.
- Maximum temperature in the summer is very high.
- The highest shade temperature of 58° C was recorded at Al Aziziyah, Libya on 13 September 1922. **Warm Temperate (Mid-Latitude) Climates-C**



- Warm temperate (mid-latitude) climates extend from 30 - 50 of latitude mainly on the eastern and western margins of continents.
- These climates generally have warm summers with mild winters.

They are grouped into four types:



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- i. Humid subtropical, i.e. no dry season and mild winter (Cfa);
 - ii. Humid subtropical, i.e. dry in winter and hot in summer (Cwa);
 - iii. Marine west coast climate(Cfb).
 - iv. Mediterranean (Cs);

Humid Subtropical Climate (Cwa)



Humid subtropical climate occurs pole ward of Tropic of Cancer and Capricorn, mainly in North Indian plains and South China interior plains.

Mediterranean Climate (Cs)



- Mediterranean climate occurs around Mediterranean sea, along the west coast of continents in subtropical latitudes between 30 - 40 latitudes e.g. Central California, Central Chile, along the coast in south eastern and south western Australia.
- These areas come under the influence of sub tropical high in summer and westerly wind in winter. Hence, the climate is characterised by hot, dry summer and mild, rainy winter.
- Monthly average temperature in summer is around 25 C and in winter below 10 C.

Humid Subtropical (Cfa) Climate





- Humid subtropical climate lies on the eastern parts of the continent in subtropical latitudes.
- In this region the air masses are generally unstable and cause rainfall throughout the year.
- They occur in eastern United States of America, southern and eastern China, southern Japan, northeastern Argentina, coastal south Africa and eastern coast of Australia.
- The annual averages of precipitation vary from 75-150 cm. Thunderstorms in summer and frontal precipitation in winter are common.
- Mean monthly temperature in summer is around 27°C, and in winter it varies from 5 -12 C. The daily range of temperature is small.

Marine West Coast Climate (Cfb)



- Marine west coast climate is located poleward from the Mediterranean climate on the west coast of north the continents.
- **The main areas are:** Northwestern Europe, west coast of North America, north of California, southern Chile, southeastern Australia and New Zealand.
- Due to marine influence, the temperature is moderate and in winter, it is warmer its latitude.
- The mean temperature in summer months ranges from 15°-20°C and in winter 4°-10°C. The annual and daily ranges of temperature are small.

Precipitation varies greatly from 50-250cm.





Cold Snow Forest Climates (D)

Cold snow forest climates! occur in the large ; continental area in the I northern hemisphere between 40 -70 north latitudes in Europe, j Asia and North America. Cold snow forest climates are divided into two types:

1. Df- cold climate with humid winter;
2. Dw- cold climate with dry winter.
3. The severity of winter is more pronounced in higher latitudes.



Cold Climate with Humid Winters (Df)

- Cold climate with humid winter occurs pole ward of marine west coast climate and mid latitude steppe.
- The annual ranges of temperature are large.
- The frost free season is short.
- The weather changes are abrupt and short. Poleward, the winters are more severe.
- The winters are cold and snowy.

Cold Climate with Dry Winters (Dew)





- Cold climate with dry winter occurs mainly over North eastern Asia.
- The development of pronounced winter anticyclone and its weakening in summer sets in monsoon like reversal of wind in this region.
- Precipitation occurs in summer.
- The annual precipitation is low from 12-15 cm.

Polar Climates (E)

Polar climates exist poleward beyond 70°latitude.

Polar climates consist of two types:

(i) Tundra (ET); Cn | Ice Cap (EF).

Tundra Climate (ET)



The tundra climate (ET) is so called after the types of vegetation, like low growing mosses, lichens and flowering plants.

This is the region of permafrost where the sub soil is permanently frozen. The short growing season and waterlogging support only low growing plants.

During summer, the tundra regions have very long duration of day light.

The ice cap climate (EF)



- The ice climate (EF) occurs over interior Greenland and Antarctica. Even in summer, the temperature is below freezing point.
- This area receives very little precipitation.
- Plateau Station Antarctica, 79°S, portrays this climate.
- The snow and ice get accumulated and the mounting pressure causes the deformation of the ice sheets and they break.
- They move as icebergs that float in the Arctic and Antarctic waters.

ICE CAP CLIMATE



HIGH LATITUDE CLIMATE



Highland Climates (H)

Highland climates are governed by topography. In high mountains, large changes in mean temperature occur over short distances.

Precipitation types and intensity also vary spatially across high lands. There is vertical zonation of layering of climatic types with elevation in the mountain environment.

CLIMATE CHANGE :

- India witnessed alternate wet and dry periods.
- Archaeological findings show that the Rajasthan desert experienced wet and cool climate around 8,000 B.C.
- The period 3,000-1,700 B.C. had higher rainfall. From about 2,000-1,700 B.C., this



region was the centre of the Harappan civilization.

- Dry conditions since then.
- During the Pleistocene epoch, glacial and inter-glacial periods occurred, the last major peak glacial period ago.
- The present inter-glacial period started 10,000 years ago.

Climate in the recent past

- Historical records of crop yield or crop failures, of floods and migration of people tell about the effects of changing climate.
- The worst devastating drought in the Sahel region, south of the Sahara desert, from 1967-1977 is one such variability.
- A number of times Europe witnessed warm, wet, cold and dry periods, the significant episodes were the warm and dry conditions in the tenth and eleventh centuries,
- Variability in climate occurs all the time. The 1990s recorded the warmest temperature of the century and some of the worst floods around the world.
- During the 1930s, severe drought occurred in southwestern Great Plains of the United States, described as the dust bowl.

Causes of Climate Change:

- A. The changes in solar output associated with sunspot activities. Sunspots are dark and cooler patches on the sun which increase and decrease in a cyclical manner. B. According to some meteorologists, when the number of sunspots increase, cooler and wetter weather and greater storminess occur.
- B. An another astronomical theory is Millankovitch oscillations, which infer cycles in the variations in the earth's orbital characteristics around the sun, the wobbling of the earth and the changes in the earth's axial tilt.
- C. Decrease in sunspot numbers is associated with warm and drier conditions. Yet, these findings are not statistically significant.
- D. Volcanism is considered as another cause for climate change. Volcanic eruption throws up lots of aerosols into the atmosphere. These aerosols remain in the atmosphere for a considerable period of time reducing the sun's radiation reaching the Earth's surface.
- E. All these alter the amount of insolation received from the sun, which in turn, might have a bearing on the climate.

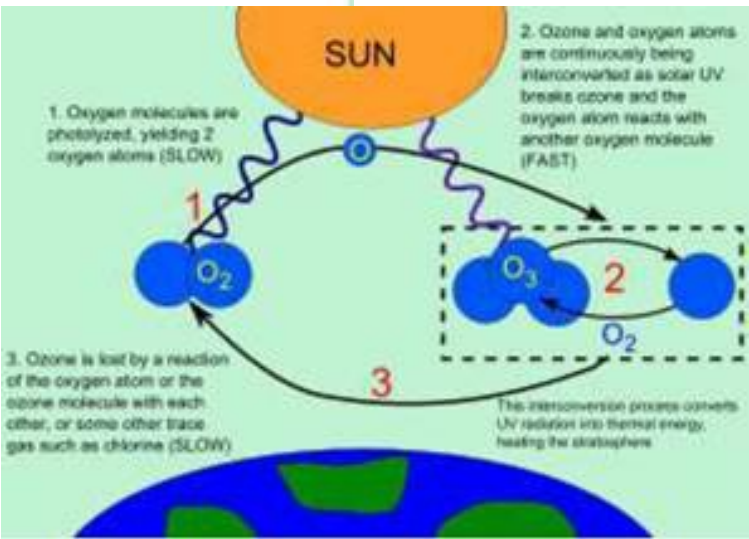
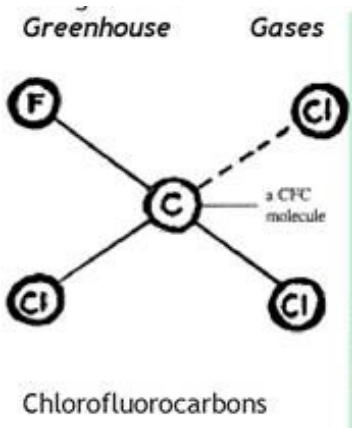


Global Warming

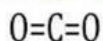
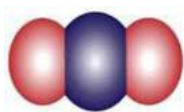
Due to the presence of greenhouse gases, the atmosphere is behaving like a greenhouse. The atmosphere also transmits the incoming solar radiation but absorbs the vast majority of long wave radiation emitted upwards by the earth's surface. The gases that absorb long wave radiation are called greenhouse gases. The processes that warm the atmosphere are often collectively referred to as the greenhouse effect.

The term greenhouse is derived from the analogy to a greenhouse used in cold areas for preserving heat. A greenhouse is made up of glass. The glass which is transparent to incoming short wave solar radiation is opaque to outgoing long wave radiation. The glass, therefore, allows in more radiation and prevents the long wave radiation going outside the glass house, causing the temperature inside the glasshouse structure warmer than outside.

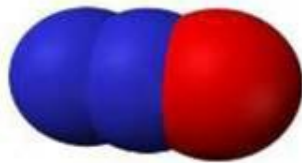
(GHGs)



The primary GHGs of concern today are carbondioxide (C02), and ozone(O3). Some other gases such as nitric oxide (NO)and carbon monoxide (CO) easily react with GHGs and affect their concentration in the atmosphere.

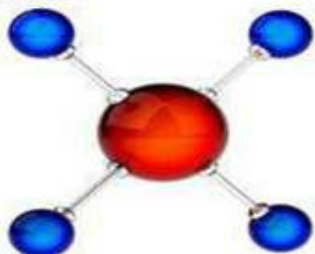


NITROUS OXIDE



METHANE

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The effectiveness of any given GHG will depend on the magnitude of the Increase in its concentration, its life time in the atmosphere and the wavelength of radiation that it absorbs. The chlorofluorocarbons(CFCs) are highly effective. Ozone which absorbs ultra violet radiation in the stratosphere is very effective in absorbing terrestrial radiation when it is present in the lower troposphere.

The largest concentration of GHGs in the atmosphere is carbon dioxide.

1. The emission of CO₂ comes mainly from fossil fuel combustion (oil, gas and coal).
2. Forests use CO₂ in their growth.
3. Forests and oceans are the sinks for the carbon dioxide. So, deforestation
4. due to changes in land use, also increases the concentration of CO₂

The time taken for atmospheric CO₂ to adjust to changes in sources to sinks is 20-50 years. It is rising at about 0.5 per cent annually.

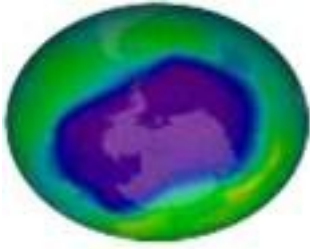
Doubling of concentration of CO₂ over pre-industrial level is used as an index for estimating the changes in climate in climatic models.

Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) are products of human activity. Ozone occurs in the stratosphere where ultra-violet rays convert oxygen into ozone. Thus, ultra violet rays do not reach the earth's surface. The CFCs which drift into the stratosphere destroy the ozone. Large depletion of ozone occurs over Antarctica. The depletion of ozone concentration in the stratosphere is called the ozone hole.

This allows the ultra violet rays to pass through the troposphere. International efforts have been initiated for reducing the emission of GHGs into the atmosphere. The most important



one is the Kyoto protocol proclaimed in 1997.



- This protocol went into effect in 2005, ratified by 141 nations.
- Kyoto protocol bounds the 35 industrialized countries to reduce their emissions by the year 2012 to 5 per cent less than the levels prevalent in the year 1990.
- The increasing trend in the concentration of GHGs in the atmosphere may, in the long run, warm up the earth.
- Rise in the sea level due to melting of glaciers and ice-caps and thermal expansion of the sea may inundate large parts of the coastal area and islands, leading to social problems.
- This is another cause for serious concern for the world community. Efforts have already been initiated to control the emission of GHGs and to arrest the trend towards global warming.
- The annual average near-surface air temperature of the world is approximately 14°C. The greatest warming of the 20th century was during the two periods, 1901 -44 and 1977-99.
- Over each of these two periods, global temperatures rose by about 0.4°C. In between, there was a slight cooling, which was more marked in the Northern Hemisphere. The globally averaged annual mean temperature at the end of the 20th century was about 0.6°C above that recorded at the end of the 19th century. The seven warmest years during the 1856-2000 were recorded in the last decade.
- The year 1998 was the warmest year, probably not only for the 20th century but also for the whole millennium.

Kyoto declaration

Implement and/or further elaborate policies and measures in accordance with its

- i. Enhancement of energy efficiency in relevant sectors of the national
- ii. Protection and enhancement of sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases not controlled by the Montreal Protocol, taking into account its commitments under relevant



international environmental agreements: promotion of sustainable forest management practices, afforestation and reforestation:

- iii. Promotion of sustainable forms of agriculture in light of climate change
- iv. Research on. and promotion, development and increased use of. new and renewable forms of energy, of carbon dioxide sequestration technologies and of advanced and innovative environmentally sound technologies:
- v. Progressive reduction or phasing out of market imperfections, fiscal incentives, tax and duty exemptions and subsidies in all greenhouse gas emitting sectors that run counter to the objective of the Convention and
- vi. Encouragement of appropriate reforms in relevant sectors aimed at promoting policies and measures which limit or reduce emissions of greenhouse gases not controlled by the Montreal Protocol:
- vii. Measures to limit and/or reduce emissions of greenhouse gases not controlled by the Montreal Protocol in the transport sector.
- viii. Limitation and/or reduction of methane emissions through recovery and use in waste management, as well as in the production, transport and distribution of energy.

