

The Landscape of the Living Area

04

Through the hills and mountains the rivers flow feeding areas where the crops grow.

In dry places when rains fade,
to supply water the tanks are made.

In every place where rain is
seen land is rich with plants
green.

Islands, dunes, bays and capes
are the things that waves shape.

Crops inland and fishing on
coast give harvests of which we
can boast.

Seeing the different landscapes
in my motherland makes our
hearts aglow.



Fig.4.1 : A Waterfall

A special feature of Sri Lanka having an area of 65610 sq.km, is the presence of various types of landscapes. You may have identified this in your home garden or school garden, village, town or in your region. In any area there are highlands or plains as physical features.



Activities

1. Name the landscapes which are mentioned in the verse above.
2. Write a group report on differences of your school garden after a careful observation.

As you have learned in chapter three, a significant feature of the land of Sri Lanka is that it rises up from the coast to the interior. You can see highlands in the central part of the Island and mountain remnants and plains around it.



Fig.4.2
Various landscapes of Sri Lanka.

In Sri Lanka central hill country is found in the middle with plains near the coast. Intermediate plains and hillocks occupy the area in between.



Activities

Pictures of the landscapes of various places in Sri Lanka are shown in Fig.4.2, Identify those landscapes and name the areas where you find them.

Teacher who came to the class to discuss various landscapes of Sri Lanka, questioned the students about the places they have visited during the vacation. The following discussion of the pupils and class teacher will help you to understand more about different landscapes of the country.

Sisitha:

We went to Nuwara Eliya during the vacation. It is not like our village. It is mountainous. There was a beautiful mountain range around it. Environment is very cold. Mist covered the land in the morning. Tea is grown in mountain slopes. Ladies plucking tea leaves with baskets hung on their backs were very busy in reaping the tea harvest. When we came back to Kandy we saw paddy lands too. But those fields were very narrow and look like a staircase from far. My father told us that these terraces were made because of the small space of land in mountain slopes. We saw vegetables grown in Welimada area. We brought fresh vegetables from there. Waterfalls and rivers flowing between the mountains increased the beauty of the country. That is not all. There were forests on those highlands, but the trees were short.

My father told us that the height of trees become shorter when the height of the land increases. Grass was the only vegetation on one side. Cows were freely grazing in these grasslands.

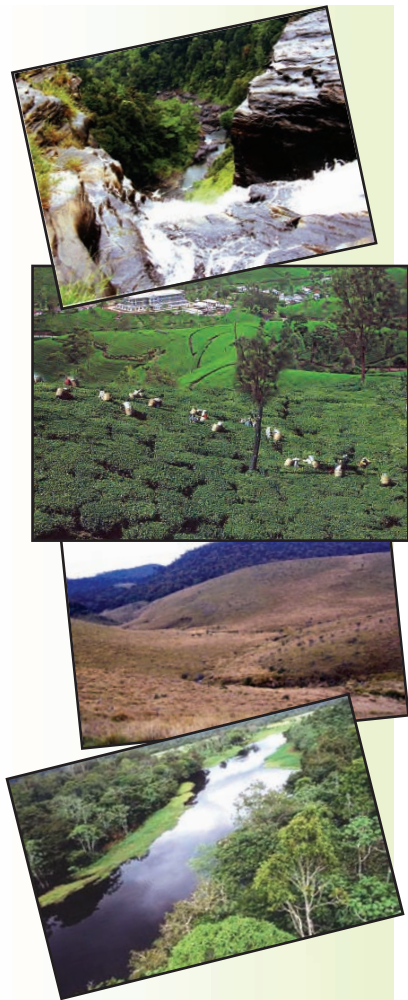


Fig. 4.3 - Landscapes of Nuwara Eliya.

Teacher

Very Good my dear son, Sisitha. The others may have understood about Nuwara Eliya as they have been to Nuwara Eliya I suppose. Sisitha told that trees there are short in height and grasslands are found on one side. Do you know why it is? Good rainfall and fair temperature are the needs for the trees to grow very high. Trees do not grow on thin poor layer of soil in some areas.

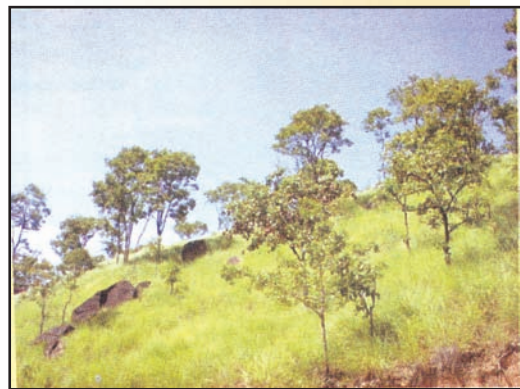


Fig.4.4 - Savanna Grasslands

Kamal:

Teacher! every day weather forecast says that the temperature of Nuwara Eliya is very low.

Teacher:

That is why the trees are short in height at Nuwara Eliya. Trees grow shorter when the temperature decreases.

Sisitha:

Teacher, what is the reason for the growth of grass only on one side?

Teacher:

That is a good question. Some areas have little rain as well as low temperature with poor soil. That is why only the grass grow. This area is very good for rearing cattle.

Hiruni got up next to tell about her visit

Hiruni

We went to Anuradhapura teacher. It is very hot there. More hot when the land gets heated. We could see big tanks there. Below these tanks there were many paddy fields. Canals supplied water to these fields. The area was very comfortable in the evening. We went to Mannar where our Chuty Mama lives. We felt very bad there because of the high heat. We visited the places along the sea coast where dried fish is made. We could not see the greenish trees there. Most of the trees were thorny. Andara, Karamba, Pathok were the main varieties. Drinking water was the problem. Chuty Mama said that there is a lime stone layer underneath the ground that makes the water salty. The wells were very deep. Drinking water is taken from tubewells in many places.



Fig. 4.5 : Paddy lands



Fig. 4.6: A scene from Mannar



Fig. 4.7 : Parakrama Samudra

Teacher

Right, Thank you Hiruni, We can discuss some more information about this area. Anuradhapura is in the Dry Zone out of the three climatic zones of Sri Lanka you have learned. It receives rain from December to February by the Northeast Monsoon. But that rainfall is not sufficient for agriculture. That is why the kings of the past built reservoirs for the use of agriculture during the dry period. Irrigated paddy cultivation was the major agricultural activity in this zone.



Activities

1. Prepare a table to highlight special features mentioned in the areas visited by students.
2. Write down the specific human activities in each region.
3. Draw the landscapes of two regions according to the information given above.
4. Explain why there are grasslands only on one side of the central highlands.
5. What are the reasons for the shorter trees in upcountry areas?
6. How much is the average temperature at Nuwara Eliya according to daily weather forecasts?
7. Note down in your note book the different temperatures at Nuwara Eliya, Anuradhapura and in your living area.

Following day the students were very keen to hear about other places that their classmates had visited. Next day Dinidu started the discussion about his visit.

Dinidu

Teacher! We decided to visit Galle for the vacation. We stayed at Hikkaduwa and went to see the coral gardens on a boat. It was a marvellous place. There were gatherings of beautiful fish among corals. Waves come slow because of the corals. Tourists were there to enjoy the coral reefs. But the coast was untidy with empty bottles and waste paper and polythene bags. Our driver said that they harm the corals by pollution. We saw a number of fishermen when we were walking along the sea shore. Some boats were landed in the shore. Then we went to see Madu Ganga. There were different types of trees with roots coming up above water. Our uncle explained that this was Kadolana (Mangrove) vegetation and they grow in lagoons near the coast. Then we went to Galle.



Fig. 4.8:
Kadolana
(Mangrove)vegetation

Teacher

Very good Dinidu! Shall we arrange a trip to see the landscapes described, with your classmates. My dear students do you know why Galle is so important? It had been a harbour from ancient times and Hikkaduwa is popular because of its coral gardens. We earn a lot from the tourists who visit these areas.



Fig. 4.9: Madu Ganga

Dinidu

Teacher, we learned about mangroves in chapter 3 and read about Kadolana as a special type of vegetation.

Teacher

Son, Kadolana is an area of water-logged marshy land with special type of trees such as Kadol, Gin Pol, Kirala. Some of these trees have long roots coming up to water level. Not only that, various types of birds, reptiles and prawns, crabs etc. also live there. Soil is protected because of this type of vegetation. Can you remember the damage caused by Tsunami ? But areas where Kadolana existed had been protected. Well, who else can come forward to tell about areas visited.

Rasmi

Teacher we went to see Sinharaja forest. We saw Sinharaja thick forest with green trees from far. But it was dark and gloomy inside the forest covered with a thick canopy of trees. There were high and large trees as well as bushes and trees of shorter height. Lots of creepers were climbing up the trunks of trees.



Fig. 4.10: Sinharaja forest

Various kinds of beautiful birds were there. On the way at Ratnapura, we saw some gem mines. It was a heavy rainy day. We were asked to soap the feet to refrain from leeches. We heard that this area receives heavy rains by May causing floods. Landslides occur due to gem mines and cutting of mountain slopes for building roads. We saw areas with landslides. People feared heavy rains would result in more landslides.

Teacher

Good ! Thank you Rasmi you have gone to a very important place, the Sinharaja forest. It is the only natural forest left in Sri Lanka now. It is a world heritage declared by UNESCO in 1989. It is in the Wet Zone of Sri Lanka. Due to heavy rain and high temperature, trees grow densely. Most common varieties are Milla, Na, Midella, Hora, Godapara and Kottamba. There were many varieties of animals, birds and reptiles in this forest.



Fig. 4.11: gem mining



Activities

1. Prepare a list of special features about the landscapes that the students have described.
2. Prepare a poster with suitable pictures for each landscape.

The nature of landscapes of different geographical areas differ considerably from each other. The physical factors and human activities are also different accordingly. There are special features of human activities adapted to the nature of the land and climatic conditions of the place. Therefore we can define the landscape as a mirror that reflects the inter-relationship between physical factors and human activities.

Identify the special features of the landscape in your living area on the basis of what you have learned.

Central Highlands

Now you have learnt about very high mountain ranges, flat land with different levels of height, rivers and waterfalls which exist in the upcountry. Following pictures will show some of these landscapes.

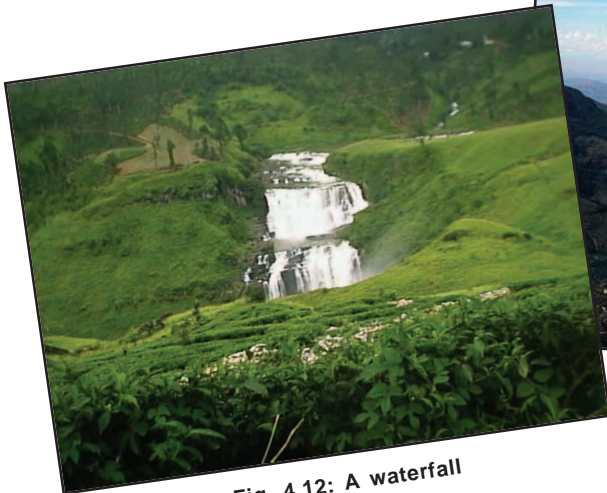


Fig. 4.12: A waterfall



Fig. 4.13 :Horton plain



Fig. 4.14 :A tea estate



Fig 4.15 : Grassland with scattered trees



Fig. 4.16 :Terraces of paddy field



Fig. 4.17 : Knuckles Mountain Range



Activities

1. Observe the pictures of upcountry landscapes above.
2. Discuss in the class and note down the human activities that can be seen in those areas.
3. Collect the information in groups on the nature of the land, climate, human activities and vegetation in these areas.
4. Go out and study the landscapes around your home or school. Put it as a drawing. Explain the reasons for such a landscape.
5. Build a model of the hill country showing mountain ranges rivers, water falls and agricultural lands with available materials from your environment.

Dry Zone

Some landscapes of the Dry Zone are shown in the following pictures. These Dry Zone landscapes can be seen in lowlands as well as in high lands in the East of central hills.

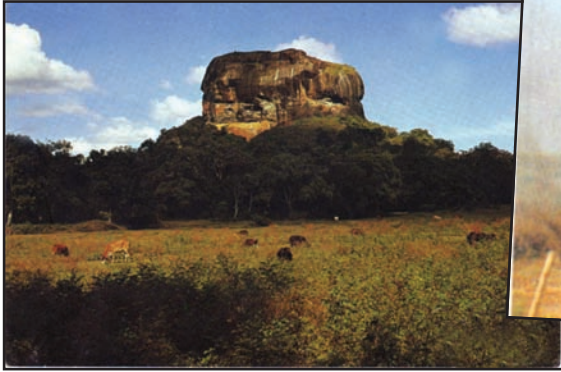


Fig. 4.18 : A Relict mountain



Fig. 4.19 : Chena cleared by fire for cultivation



Fig. 4.20: A tank



Fig. 4.21: Dry mixed forest



Activities

Observe the pictures above well and do the exercises given below.

1. Collect pictures of the landscapes in the Dry Zone which are not shown here.
2. Explain the relationship of human activities to physical factors of the Dry Zone.
3. Build up a model to show a tank settlement.

Wet Zone

South and Western parts of Sri Lanka which receive a rainfall of 2500 - 5000 mm is named as the Wet Zone. The South western hill slopes of the central hills facing the Southwest monsoon is also included in this zone. Therefore both plains and highlands can be seen in this landscape. These landscapes are also modeled by physical factors and human activities. When these landscapes are compared with the Dry Zone landscapes, they seem to be more complicated.

Few landscapes of the Wet Zone are given in the following pictures.



Fig. 4.22 : A rubber estate



Fig. 4.23: Floods



Fig. 4.24 : A Marshy land in the Wet Zone



Fig. 4.25: tile factory



Activities

1. Examine the features of landscapes given above and draw the specific landscape around your living area.
2. Prepare a wall exhibit by collecting the pictures of landscapes in the Wet Zone.
3. Prepare a paper on specific human activities in the Wet Zone.
4. Suggest some human activities possible to make full use of the Wet Zone landscapes.



Student survey

Identify the problems of physical landscapes in your school area. Discuss with the teacher how they influence your daily life.

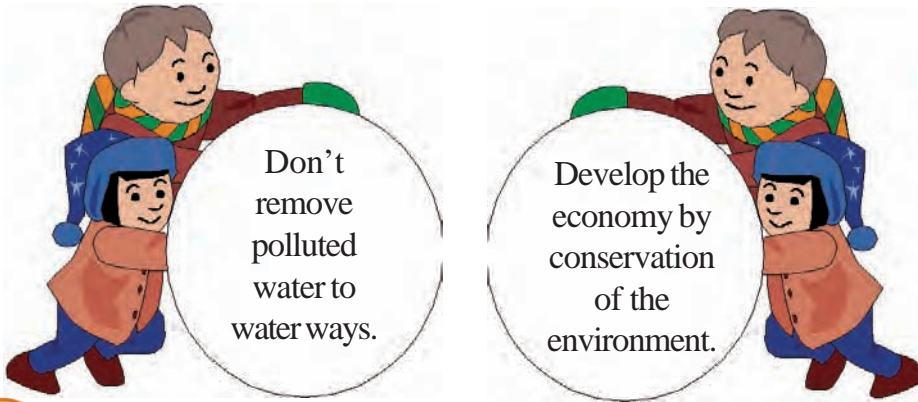
Teacher

You may be knowing that both administrative capital of Sri Lanka, Sri Jayewardenepura - Kotte, and the capital city of Colombo are located in the Wet Zone. There are many other cities in the Wet Zone apart from these. They are highly populated landscapes with storeyed buildings and complex road net works. Most of the industries are also found in the Wet Zone. Textile factories in Katunayaka, Koggala and Biyagama free trade zones are some examples. There are some industrial estates too in this area.



Activities

1. Mark and name Katunayaka, Koggala and Biyagama free trade zones in a map of Sri Lanka. Write the ways by which the industrial areas are polluted.
2. What are the actions that can be taken to avoid pollution?
3. Explain how you can contribute to avoid the environmental pollution.



Activities

1. Prepare a folder exhibiting the physical and human activities of the landscape in your area.
2. Select a landscape of your choice. Draw pictures / graphs to show its nature of land, climate, natural vegetation and human activities.

Coastal belt

Sri Lanka is an island with a beautiful sea coast. Coastal landscapes are specially important among the landscapes of Sri Lanka. The coastal landscapes of Sri Lanka was the major reason for the attraction of foreigners in the past and present. You may have studied before, that we have most of the coastal features of Sri Lanka such as bays, lagoons, deltas, islands, capes, coral reefs and sand dunes.



Activities

1. Build models of land scapes in the coastal region. Use easily available metrials.
2. Write an essay on the topic "Sea coast is a valuable resource".



Student survey

Go to the coast and observe the sea waves coming towards land. Discuss in the class how the waves affect the coast line.

Here are some landscape features of the coast.



Fig. 4.26-.A fishing area



Fig. 4.27: A tourist hotel near the beach



Fig. 4.28: Arungam Bay



Fig. 4.29: Coral reef



Fig. 4.30 : A sand bank along the coast

Coast is damaged by human activities such as,

- Removing sand from the beach
- Digging limestone
- Removing sand from rivers
- Constructions without planning
- Removing protective vegetation from the coast
- Destroying Mangroves (Kadolana vegetation)



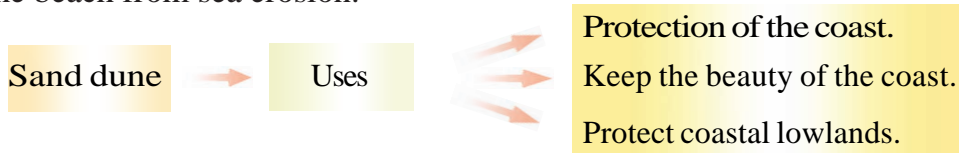
Activities

Draw a picture to show a fishery landscape.



Fig. 4.31 : A damaged coastline

There are sand dunes in the beach in some places. Kalpitiya and Hambantota beaches are examples. These sand dunes act as a barrier to protect the beach from sea erosion.



All the activities of man on the land of Sri Lanka are connected with landscapes. You may have understood that human physical relationships exist when you were studying the landscapes in the Hill Country, Wet Zone, Dry Zone and coastal belt.

Let us recognise our environment through different landscapes and also protect and conserve these landscapes to attain a sustainable development of the country.



Exercises

1. Indicate the landscape (from among you have studied) to which the following features belong : plateau, sand dunes, mountain ranges, waterfalls, bays, irrigation networks, lagoons and mountain remnants.
2. Fill in the blanks of these statements.
 - The roads to upcountry are constructed through
 - is the major problem of agriculture in the Dry Zone.
 - South western region is under threats of due to heavy rainfall.
 - is a special vegetation in the coast line.
 - The land areas surrounded by sea water are named as

A Summary of what you have learned

- The physical nature of the landscape in your living area.
- The different landscapes based on physical and cultural factors in Sri Lanka in relation to your living area.
- Landscapes are results of the interaction of man and environment.
- Different landscapes exist in different zones in Sri Lanka.
- Practical evidences of landscape in your area.