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TITLE; **Human and physical geographical assets of Africa South of the Sahara.**

**Introduction**

The Sahara region in Africa is located in the northern region of the African continent. The Sahara is the largest hot desert in the world. It covers 8.5 million kilometers which is 25 percent of the continent. Africa South of Sahara refers to areas and regions which lie south of the Sahara which is also known as Sub-Saharan Africa and contains 53 countries with an estimated population of 1.18 billion between 2011 to 2022. Areas covered by the Sub Sahara are Central Africa, East Africa, Southern Africa, and West Africa.

**Physical and human geographical assets**.

The Sub-Saharan region contains a wide variety of physical landforms; mountains, rift valleys, plateaus, basins, and a wide variety of climate zones and precipitation patterns.

Many physical landforms were formed due to the plate tectonic movement that took place during the breaking apart of the super continent, Pangea. The great rift valley for example is gradually moving away from the rest of the African plate. The movement is so slow that it might be unnoticeable but after 100 years the rift will have expanded by 2ft. Some of the deepest lakes were formed along the rift valley where water filled huge cracks on the earth’s surface over time. Lake Tanganyika is the world’s second-largest and second-deepest freshwater lake. Its depth is about 4820 ft. Other lakes found in the rift valley are L. Albert, L. Edward, L. Kivu, L. Mweru, L. Victoria, L. Malawi and L. Kyoga. On the east of rift valley, there is the horn of Africa. It is a protruding peninsula that has the countries; Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia. There is also the Gulf of Eden on its north across from which is the Arab country of Yemen, on the Arabian Peninsula. Djibouti and Eritrea are adjacent to the Bab almandab strait, which is a narrow waterway. linking the red sea to the north and the Gulf of Eden to the south.

Sub -Saharan Africa has large tropical basins. The largest is the Congo basin which begins in the highlands of the Rift Valley and is the drainage area for the Congo River. Congo River is Africa’s largest river by discharge and is also the world’s deepest river. The Nile is also a major river in Africa. It flows from Lake Victoria in the North of the Rift Valley and passes through 11 different countries and is regarded as the world’s longest river. Niger River is the third longest river in Africa. it begins in Sierra Leone and flows through Guinea, Mali, Nige, and, Nigeria, and empties into the Atlantic Ocean.

Africa’s Sub- Saharan largest ecoregion is the Sahel. The Sahel is a transitional area that connects the dry Sahara to the tropical regions of the south. The Sahel is mostly grassland. It is among the regions mostly affected by desertification which has caused the Sahara to expand.

Generally, the continent is hot with temperate a climate in the higher elevations. The tropical rain for rainforest Africa receives upward of 3000mm of rain annually, while areas such as the Namib desert receive less than 10mm of rain per year.

**Human geographical assets**

Sub-Saharan Africa is a peripheral region. The peripheral region usually supplies raw materials, food, and cheap labor to the core industrial countries. The wide variety of climatic zones greatly influences the economic activities carried out in the region. Agriculture, which is considered the region’s most essential economic activity, is largely influenced by climate. Essential climatic agricultural regions are tropical wet, highland, savannah, desert, and Mediterranean. Common crops in the tropical wet regions are coffee, cocoa, oil palms, pineapple, and plantain. Common crops in the savannah region are eggplant, cassava paper, watermelon, cucumber, peanuts, okra, sorghum, grain crops, and millet. Common crops in the desert region are cotton and date palms. Common Mediterranean crops are olives, onions, tomatoes, vegetables, figs, and oranges. Common highland crops are alfalfa, wheat, and potatoes. Most of these crops are exported and used in the manufacture of finished products such as coffee powder, and vegetable oil hence earning various sub-Saharan regions revenue.

The presence of forests as a geographical asset enables forestry to take place. Africa has an abundance of forest cover. Forest cover is heavier in the central and west African sub-Sahara region. Forest products such as high-grade woods like mahogany are exported hence resulting in significant revenue.

Fishing is also a major economic activity due to the presence of various water bodies in the region. It has fisheries on all its marine coasts as well as inland. Freshwater fisheries are largely supported by the great lakes and the Nile River. West Africa is among the world’s most economically important fishing zone. Lake Victoria is the most productive freshwater fishery in the world and the Nile tilapia are its dominant commercial fish species. Most of the marine fisheries catch is exported but the inland fisheries which contain more than 3000 fish species are not exported.

The region is also a major producer of metals, minerals, and oils. Sub-Saharan countries such as Zimbabwe, Angola, Gabon, Burkina Faso, Botswana, Ghana, and Mali among others export metals such as uranium which is used to produce nuclear energy, nickel, platinum, and bauxite. The most profitable minerals are gold and diamond. South Africa is the leading gold producer, Mali, Guinea, Tanzania, and Ghana are also other major gold producers in the sub-Saharan region. Botswana, South Africa, Angola, DRC, and Namibia are the largest diamond producers. Some Sub-Saharan regions also mine oil and natural gas in Nigeria, Libya, Algeria, Egypt, and Angola are the major oil mining countries.

The diversity of culture in the sub-Saharan region also encourages tourism in the area. The many landforms in the region also promote tourism.

**Problems and Limitations in the South of the Sahara**

High levels of poverty; The sub-Saharan region is the slowest developing region, economically, in the world. It experiences high levels of unemployment and poverty. The high levels of poverty in the region have been associated with rapid population growth yet the countries experience fewer job opportunities. According to SDG central Africa leads in extreme poverty rates of 54.8% followed by southern Africa with 45.1% then western Africa at 36.8% and finally eastern Africa at 33.8%. other causes of poverty in these sub-Saharan regions are factors such as war, famine, and land availability.

Deforestation and over-exploitation of natural resources; this is a major problems in the region as once a resource is considered economically profitable it is fully exploited leading to scarcity. in the year 2021, FAOSTAT analyzed land cover data which established that across all SSA countries, the area under forest declined from about 734million ha in 1990 to an estimated of 365million ha in 2022 which translates to a loss of 13.45% of its forest area in 1990. An example is forests, the raw materials forests provide for industries are of great economical value leading to over-exploitation of forests which leads to deforestation therefore causing a tragic impact on both the environment and climate

The heavy burden of foreign debt; in the effort of the region’s leadership system to improve the people’s social amenities and to grow more industries, many countries in the region borrow large foreign debts which they are unable to pay

Political instability and conflict; many of the countries in the sub-Saharan region are in constant chaos due to political instability. During the previous years, African countries have experienced political assassinations, genocides, civil wars, and insurgencies. In 2021 alone 18 sub-Saharan African countries experienced armed conflicts. This results in violence which leads to the destruction of property and loss of lives therefore greatly pulling back any proper developments in the countries.

Food insecurity; extreme climatic changes and drought in SSA have led to the hunger crisis. The constant sudden change in the region’s climatic conditions leads to unpredictability of the farmer’s chart hence difficulty in predicting when to conduct the various farming activities, hence low production of food. Since the region has a very large population, the food produced is not able to satisfy its people. Due to this many people die as a result of starvation.

Increased levels of damaging natural disasters; Natural disasters such as forest fires, earthquakes, landslides, and drought experienced in the region have led to drawbacks in the economic sector of the countries due to the major destructions that accompany them. The large tracks of forests destroyed during forest fires greatly undermine forestry in the region.

Desertification; Many regions in the sub-Saharan are faced with the problem of desertification. The Sahel is at the frontline of this problem. Desertification leads to infertile soils which greatly undermines agriculture hence making most people turn to other ways of making a living but leading to a major decline in the region’s food production. The major cause of desertification in the region is overgrazing.

**Physical and human geographical assets of South Asia**

**Introduction**

South Asia is a subregion of Asia located between the Himalayan mountains to the north and the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal to the south. South Asia’s physical geographic features influence the region’s culture and traditions. Physical features in the area include mountains, plateaus, plains, steppes and deserts, freshwater bodies, and saltwater bodies.

Physical geographical assets of South Asia

Much of the physical earth geography of South Asia is a result of tectonic activity. The Indian plate collided with the Eurasian plate. Both were comprised of fairly low-density material and therefore when colliding occurred the two land masses folded forming an accordion and creating the mountain range in South Asia. The tectonic collision resulted in feats such as Mount Everest located in Himalaya Mountain ranges on the border of Nepal and China. Himalaya is the highest mountain in the world. Due to continuous tectonic activity, the mountain continues to rise at a rate of 5mm annually. Other features are the Karakoram Mountain range which goes through Pakistan, India, Chin, and Afghanistan has the highest number of peaks above 8000m, the Hindu Kush in northwest

The Indo-Gangetic plain is found on the south of the mountains and was formed from combined alluvial plains of the Indus, Ganges (Ganga), and Brahmaputra rivers. Ganges and Brahmaputra brought up the Ganges-Brahmaputra Delta which is also known as the Bengal Delta and is one of the largest rivers deltas in the world. It covers the fertile plains of Bangladesh and West Bengal, India, ad supa ports wide range of agriculture, fishing, and wetland ecosystems.

The next main feature of South Asia is the Deccan plateau which was also formed due to the region’s tectonic activity. The regions peninsula India, Sri Lanka, and the Deccan plateau were formed of platform plateaus and tablelands. South Asia includes tablelands with uplifted margins such as western and eastern ghats and terraced and dissected plateaus with lava mantles or intrusions.

Rivers in south Asia include the Indus, Ganges, and Brahmaputra which form a lowland region that was home to several ancient civilizations. It also has other major rivers such as Yamuna and Krishna among others which provide water resources for irrigation, hydropower generation, and transportation and support numerous ecosystems.

Tamilnad plains is a coastal lowland of Tamil Nadu state in Southern India and is bounded by the Andhra plains to the north, the Bay of Bengal which has a vast coastline along the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean. The coastal areas offer opportunities for trade, ports, fisheries, tourism, and offshore gas and oil exploration. Maldives, Sri Lanka, Andaman, and, Nicobar Islands are known for their attractive beaches and marine biodiversity.

South Asia is home to several biodiversity hotspots which include the Western Ghats and the Eastern Himalayas. The east of South Asia is one of the most biodiverse regions on Earth. Areas of biodiversity in this region are Indo-Burma, Sunda land, and Wallace, much of this region’s spectacular flora and fauna is not found anywhere else in the world. It also has endemic species and diverse ecosystems that contribute to ecological balance, conservation efforts and eco-tourism.

**Human geographical assets**

Areas around the Kaveri, Ponnaiyar, Polar, Vaigai, Tambra Parni, Vellar, and Arni Rivers that flow East into the Bay of Bengal have Red loamy soils and sandy loamy soils which are rich in iron, therefore, making agriculture the mainstay of the region’s economy, this is largely enabled by the large irrigation canal system from the Kaveri delta. Crops planted include legumes, oil seeds, sugarcane, tobacco, and rice.

The coast of Tamilnad Plains is one of the most industrialized areas in India since the early development of industries by the British. These factories produce vegetable oil, fertilizer, textile, cement, chemicals, electronic equipment, automobiles, and galvanized pipe.

South Asia is an incredibly diverse region in terms of culture, language, traditions, and religion. In the northern region of south Asia, the Indo-European language like Hindi dominate due to the Aryan invasion, Along the Himalayas, languages in the Sino- Tibetan family, and in southern India, most groups speak a Dravidian family language which comprises the indigenous language of South Asia. Some of South Asia’s religious beliefs include Hinduism and Buddhism which are the major religions then Jainism and Sikhism. This diversity has led to a rich tapestry in art, music, dance, literature, and cuisine making South Asia a thriving culturally significant region.

South Asia has several heritage sites which have been termed World Heritage by UNESCO. This is because these sites showcase South Asia’s natural and cultural treasures. These sites include the Kathmandu Valley in Nepal, the ancient city of Sigiriya in Sri Lanka, the historic city of Jaipur in India, and the Buddhist monuments at Sanchi in India. These sites act as tourist attractions to people from around the world and therefore contribute to the region’s cultural significance.

Numerous ancient civilizations and empire have left their mark on the region leading us to the fact that South Asia has quite a deep historical heritage. Some of the known civilizations are the Indus Valley civilization, Maurya Empire, Gupta Empire, Mughal Empire including various Hindu and Buddhist kingdoms which have all shaped the architecture and history of South Asia. The region boasts historical sites such as the Taj Mahal, Qutub Minar, Ajanta Ellora caves as well as the ruins of Mohenjo-Daro.

Due to diaspora influence, South Asia’s diaspora has spread across the world hence contributing to the region’s cultural exchange, and is currently one of the World’s largest diasporas. This influence has been shaped by the dispersion of people, goods, ideas, and beliefs leading the region to excel in fields that include science, technology, arts, business, and sports among others which have played a major role in global cultural integration.

**Problems and limitations**

Natural disasters; South Asia is highly vulnerable to natural disasters such as earthquakes, cyclones, floods, and drought. The Nico Bar island for example which is 711sq miles was hit by a tsunami triggered by a massive earthquake in the Indian Ocean in December 2004. This led to the death of several people and extensive damage to infrastructure and disruption of economic activities in 2007 extreme flooding overflowed into Indonesia and submerged about 70% of Jakarta, which is Indonesia’s capital.

High population density; being home to a large proportion of the world’s population, the region is leading in high population density in many areas, hence putting pressure on resources, infrastructure, and public services leading to overcrowding, inadequate housing, and strain on health care and education system. In South Asia, the high population is partially caused by the strong religious beliefs in the region. The large population has therefore led to slow economic growth, increased poverty, and a surge in foreign trade imbalance.

Political instability; some countries in South Asia have experienced political instability which is brought about by issues such as frequent changes in government that cause conflict due to disagreement of different parties regarding the changes, corruption, and governance challenges. This, therefore, delays long-term planning and effective implementation of policies that may bring about development in the countries. During the first decade of the 21st century, the areas in South Asia experienced intense violence. The government of India for example battled ongoing revolts in Kashmir, In Pakistan an extremely bloody rebellion was led by the Pakistani Taliban, In Sri Lanka the Tamil Tigers between 2002 and 2005, terrorist attacks in Bangladesh that carried out assassinations and coordinated bombings which were linked to the Harakat ul-Jihad-i-islam Bangladesh and Nepal too.

Environmental degradation; Rapid industrialization, urbanization, and population growth have led to issues such as air and water pollution, deforestation, climatic change, geophysical setting, ecosystem changes, import of hazardous waste as well as depletion of natural resources which pose major environmental challenges such as global warming. The most threatened areas are grasslands and mountain forests of the Himalayas and the Sundarbans ecosystem. Water pollution in the region has become even more serious in the region to the extent that the availability of fresh water is very seasonal and its supplies become more threatened by higher temperatures

Ethnic and religious tensions; ethnic and religious communities in South Asia sometimes led to social tensions and conflicts. These divisions hinder cooperation, cohesion, and economic and political stability.

Poverty and inequality; limited access to basic services, lack of employment opportunities and unequal distribution of resources lead to persistent poverty levels despite economic growth in some countries. In South Asia, there is a wide gap between the wealthy and poverty-stricken areas which are even unable to access the most basic services such as healthcare, education, and even water.

**Physical and human assets of East Asia**

**Introduction.**

East Asia is a subregion of the continent of Asia. It has a variety of landforms ranging from plateaus to rivers to basins and mountains. East Asia is bordered by Russia to the north, a series of mountains to the west, and South Asia to the south.

**Physical assets of East Asia**

The Asian continent is home to the Himalayan mountains and Mount Everest. The presence of these mountains causes a rain shadow effect hence the dry conditions of the type B climate that dominates western China. These dry conditions of western China have led to an expansive uninhabitable region in its center. Many of the major rivers that flow towards the east are fed by the streams that are a result of the melting snow from the high peaks.

The landforms were mainly created by plate tectonic movement. The Tibetan plateau is the world’s largest plateau region and is about 15000 ft. Lhasa is the largest city in the region. The region experiences little precipitation in the form of hailstorms mixed with winds. Generally, the landscape is rocky and barren.

Another landform is the Gobi Desert between Mongolia and China. The Mongolian steppe and northern China mainly experience colder type D climates. There are islands and peninsulas on the eastern coast of the continent, such as Taiwan and the countries of Japan and North and South Korea. The mountainous islands in Japan are prone to earthquakes. Central and southeastern Asia has fertile river valleys.

At the mouth of the yellow river is the North China Plain which has rich farmland and is the most populated area in China. It has extended areas of loess that have been terraced for cultivation. The area also has deciduous forests. The great wall of China is also found in the region.

Western China is arid and has large uninhabited regions like the Mikan desert. This is due to the hot summer and the long cold winters that are caused by the cold winds blowing from the north. The central area of China is subtropical. It includes the Yangtze River and the cities of Shanghai and Chongqing. The area has amazing agricultural land due to alluvial processes. The region has low mountains and hills.

The Yellow River is named after the light-colored silt that washes into the river. The river flows from the Tibetan highlands through the north China plain and into the yellow sea. Projects developed along the river like dams and canals provide water for agricultural use.

The Yangtze River flows from the Tibetan plateau and through the Saharan province, through the three gorges region and its lower basin, and into the East China Sea. The three gorges dam is the largest in the world. There is also the lower Liao River basin and the Songhua River basin cut through northern China. The region is called the Northern China Plain.

The southern region of China has the Pearl River basin which is essential in agriculture and is also a commercial district. The mouth of the river flows into the South China Sea. The system has the Xi River, Pearl River, and their tributaries. They are China’s third longest drainage system after the Yangtze River system.

**Human geographical assets in East Asia**

The region has diverse human geographical assets, from natural wonders to cultural heritage sites to amazing cities and historical landmarks. For example, Tokyo the capital city of Japan is a major economic, cultural, and political center. It has attractive assets such as the Shibuya crossing, the Tokyo Sky tree, and the Asakusa district.

Other amazing cities are Beijing in China and Seoul in South Korea. Seoul is known for its technology, K-pop music, and abundance of cultural heritage. It has amazing landmarks such as the Gyeongbokgung Palace, Changdeokgung Palace, and the shopping district of Myeongdong. Beijing the capital city of China has the forbidden city, Tiananmen Square, Great Wall of China, and the Temple of Heaven.

Angkor Wat is among East Asia’s most essential archeological sites. It has the temple complex in Siem reap which is an example of Khmer architecture. Japan has Mount Fuji which attracts tourists and climbers. China has a terracotta army which is a group of many life-sized terracotta statues of chariots, horses, and soldiers.

Jehu Island in South Korea is also a major tourist site. Hoi An in Vietnam is known for its beautiful architecture containing houses made of wood, vibrant lanterns, and atmospheric streets. Hongkong in China is also an essential administrative region of China. It is an international financial and business center. It is also popular for its skyline, markets, and cultural attractions.

Taipei in Taiwan is the capital city of Taiwan. It is also the largest city in Taiwan. It has a mix of modern architecture, traditional temples and beautiful night markets. Taipei is acknowledged for its technological developments. Busan in South Korea is a major port city. It has attractive beaches and seafood markets. It is an essential commercial area.

Countries such as China have increased foreign trade and a firm export-based economy. The growth in China’s economy has had both positive and negative impacts. China has the most rapidly growing economy in the world. This is because China is a major manufacturer and exporter of goods. China has invested around the world and also has a firm hand in international politics and influences major debates. Although the countries in Southeast Asia are independent now, they still follow some aspects of the colonial period. An example is the Vietnamese language which is written in the Roman alphabet and was founded by the French.

The region is densely populated and Asia generally has the world’s largest population. Some countries in the region have tried to come up with ways of dealing with the large population and reducing the numbers. For example, China’s large population has resulted in the government implementing a one-child-only policy, which has helped in reducing the population in the region but has also caused an imbalance in the percentages of boys and girls being born in most of the provinces in China.

The historical geopolitical situation in China was to secure a buffer around its mainland, unify the Han majority and protect its vulnerable coastal region. Economic trade and the interactions China has had with the global economy have made it dependent on other countries for the continuation of its economic success.

**Problems and Limitations of the geographical assets in East Asia**

Limited agricultural land; Having a large population, needs more land to meet the food demand in the region. But due to the rugged landscape, less land is left for agriculture. The rapid industrialization in the region also leaves even lesser land for agriculture as the industries occupy more land.

Scarcity of water; The region often experiences drought and hence cannot depend on rainwater as a source of water. Rapid urbanization and inefficient water resource management limit water supply in the region.

Climate change; Changes such as rising sea levels, increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather conditions, and changing rainfall patterns cause a risk to the region’s ecosystem, water resources, and agriculture.

Few energy resources; The region has limited energy resources for example oil and natural gas. This, therefore, makes it rely on exported sources of energy. This can cause geopolitical and also economic problems most especially in times when the world is experiencing global energy price fluctuation.

Environmental degradation; The increased urbanization rates and industrialization in the region have also led to environmental degradation. This is because of activities like pollution, deforestation, and a threat to biodiversity due to habitat loss. This has worsened the already harsh climatic conditions in the region too.

Population density and urbanization; The region has a high population density, and the overpopulation in the urban areas has led to problems in housing, transportation, and the provision of basic services.

Transboundary disputes; Disputes in transboundary areas such as the South China Sea and the Korean peninsula, have hindered cooperation and resource sharing thus generally leading to a drawback in the economy of such areas.

Natural disasters; The region is prone to earthquakes, tsunamis, typhoons, and volcanic eruptions. When these natural disasters occur, they lead to the loss of property, disruption of economic activities, and even loss of lives. This greatly pulls back the development of the affected areas.

Good governance; Despite having economic growth, with poor governance, not much can be achieved. Corruption is a very big problem in the region. The region should embrace the rule of law and get rid of corruption and inequality in the countries. This is because inequality undermines unity and peace. When there is poor governance violence is likely to rise.

Declined workforce; The population of countries like Japan has begun falling because of fertility plummeting below replacement rates and the population is aging hence declined workforce.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, all these regions are rich in natural resources such as minerals and vast biodiversity, diverse cultural heritage, and significant contributions to literature music, and art in one way or another. East Asia however exceeds these other regions in technological capabilities, strong education systems, and economic powerhouses like China, Japan, and South Korea.

Therefore, even though these regions experience various problems and limitations, they also own enormous potential for growth and development. By addressing their challenges through sustainable strategies, investing in infrastructure, education, and healthcare not leaving out regional cooperation, these regions can open up opportunities that lead them to progress and prosperity.

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