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Submission date: 03-Jul-2023 01:42AM (UTC+1200)

Submission ID: 2125437555

File name: Earth_Science.docx (24.02K)

Word count: 2698

Character count: 15033

Earth Science – Geography

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Earth Science – Geography

Geographical Assets of Africa South of the Sahara

The South Saharan part of Africa is a diversified and geographically abundant region with multiple human and physical assets, including physical features, mineral resources, human capital, and agricultural potential. The African continent comprises plateaus and basins with short mountain chains. The single continuous feature that exists is the eastern rift valley that runs within the tectonic plate boundaries from the Red Sea all the way to South Africa.

One of the significant geographical assets is the Victoria Falls, found within the Zimbabwe and Zambia border. Victoria Falls was considered a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1989. These falls are created by River Zambezi, which flows through six countries in Southern Africa. The river plays a significant role in providing water for human consumption as well as wildlife (Oppong, 2021). The Falls also support a rainforest ecosystem which serves as a home for different species of plants and also a favourable microclimate for plants and animals. Victoria Falls also provides a wide range of tourist activities, including boat cruises, white-water rafting, jumping over the Falls Bridge, and helicopter flights.

The Namib Desert is another geographical asset found within the coastal deserts of Angola, South Africa, and Namibia, which possess most of the desert. The Namib Desert scenery varies across the region due to its distribution and wide side. The coastline desert produces moisture, enabling the succulent bushes to grow. The desert also consists of large gravel plains, sand, rocks, dunes, plants, trees, and grasses (Oppong, 2021). Off-road driving is a threat to the Namib Desert. It causes great damage to gravel plains, where car depressions can exist for more than 30 years since rainfall is irregular and sparse to wash them away. In addition, the footprints

and unattractive and destroy the lichens. The lichens are most vulnerable to physical harm since they cannot repair swiftly and grow slowly (Dube & Nhamo, 2019).

In the early 1950s, large oilfields were discovered in the Niger Delta. This discovery transformed the agricultural-dominated economy into a petroleum export-based economy. However, corruption, poor management, theft of oil revenues, and excessive borrowing against the subsequent oil income riches led to more harm than good. Most of the country's basic services and infrastructure collapsed in cities and rural areas, including roads to markets, water supplies, schools, and clinics.

Ethiopia is a major exporter of clothing, shoes, traditional livestock, and coffee export. The country has made ⁸ significant economic growth that has led to the development of government initiatives and foreign investors from China. The Katanga province in DR Congo contains the country's copper riches and other resources (Oppong, 2021). The protrusion from Lubumbashi to central Zambia is the Copperbelt heart, where the minerals flow into the world market through railways that links to the ports onto the Indian Ocean coasts of Southern and Eastern Africa. The Sub-Saharan culture is complex and vast.

Individuals belonging to diverse ethnic groups speak about 1000 and more languages. Numerically, Africa's largest groups of individuals include major nations, such as the Zulu of South Africa and the Yoruba of Nigeria. Generally, this geographic environment has the planet's most complex and disintegrated cultural mosaic. Africa's linguistic geography is a vital element of cultural-territorial intricacy. ⁵ The political realm is dynamic: modifications in political leadership via ¹ coups and military takeovers, as is an authoritarian rule, are most common. ¹ The regions share similar demographic trends of agrarian lifestyles, low-income levels, and large family sizes but different religions. ¹ South of the African Transition Zone, the most dominant

belief systems are Christian and animist based, while Islam is widespread in the north. Civil and division unrest can happen when the different religions meet and fight for political control.

The limitations affecting this region's economic and social development are mainly historical and natural. Natural limitations include geographical and climatic features. The arid climate and low land fertility affect the development of agro-industrial activities (Oppong, 2021). Desertification continues due to human activities and natural forces, which pressure the region via overgrazing and the lack of rainfall. The historical limitation is the long colonial period, with which African nations have been a human resource and a raw material for more developed countries (Oppong, 2021). Indigenous individuals were used as a labour force, leading to under-development. The colonial period negatively affected the social and economic development of the African continent. Besides, it destroyed the local demography's extensive cultural and economic heritage. In addition, colonial boundaries separated close-knit communities into different colonies leading to disregard of ethnic boundaries. Most of the geopolitical issues affecting Africa today can be traced back to colonialism.

Other limitations include poverty and shortage of food and water for domestic purposes. Africa is home to poor and developing countries across the world. Poverty is common in the urban slums of the largest cities and in the countryside (Azzarri & Signorelli, 2020). Moreover, there is a catastrophic shortage of health care, leading to periodic outbreaks of different epidemics. Low land fertility necessitates fertilizers and new technologies for growing modern crops. Farmers also need financial assistance from the government since it is difficult for them to compete with farmers from developed countries, India and China, which are favoured by natural conditions.

Geographical Assets of East Asia

East Asia includes China, Taiwan, Japan, North and South Korea, and Mongolia. "East Asia" includes more than just the mountainous and riverine continent. East Asians have greatly shaped the region's landscape. The Yellow Sea, Taiwan Strait, and South China Sea are among the features. East and South China Seas are also present. Japan and China claim ownership over islands with oil reserves and fishing grounds in these waters.

East Asia's geographic assets include the Great Rivers. The Huang He River, often known as the Yellow River due to the Yellow sediments it brings, is one of the rivers that collectively make up this geographical treasure. It encircles the Ordos Desert in a wide circle before drifting through the North China Plain and into the Bohai Gulf. In China, the Yangzi is regarded as a well-known river known as the Long River. The historical region of China and North China need water from the Huang He and its tributaries. Yang Zi is the main source of the Lower Chang Basin, which contains Shanghai, and it is here that the largest dam in the world controls the water flow. The Tibetan Plateau's icy highlands are the place of genesis for the Yangzi and Huang.

The West River and Xi Jiang confluence results in an estuary widely regarded as China's most important financial and trade centre (Lampton et al., 2020). Its position is perfect because of its proximity to Shenzhen and Hong Kong. The Liao River's origins are not far from the Gobi Desert. The river then flows south before crossing the Northeast China Plain and emptying into the Bohai Gulf. These places have very few residents due to the severe winters.

Additionally, it is unsuitable for agriculture, but the region is rich in minerals, which gives the local population employment opportunities in the mining sector. Peninsulas and islands can also be found in East Asia (Nijman et al., 2016). The Korean Peninsula is the land bridge that joins Asia and Japan. The Shandong and Liao-dong peninsulas also stretch into the Yellow

Sea, which connects to the deposits of the Huang and Liao rivers. On the continent of Asia are the islands that have made significant contributions to the contemporary human geography of the region. The fertile soils deposited at the river are China's most important geographical assets because of their location.

The topography of China is terraced, and the direction that the terraces run in is from west to east. It is stated that the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau has the highest elevation; its height is 4,000 meters. The mountains Kunlunshan, Hengduanshan, and Qilianshan may be found on the northern and eastern sides of the plateau, which are found in the first and second terraces. Large-scale basins are on the second terrace, approximately 2000 meters above sea level (Shi et al., 2022). The mountains of Xuefengshan, Wushan, Taihangshan, and The Greater Hinggan Mountains separate the second and third terraces. Plains 200 meters above sea level can be found on the third terrace, which also features a wealth of maritime resources.

The Yellow Mountains, for example, are one of the majestic landscapes found in China. Some of these mountains are held in the Chinese culture to have religious importance. Qingcheng Shan, Wuding Shan, Longhu Shan, and Qiyun Shan are other regional mountains. There is a sacred hill or mountain in every region, and it is there that people flock to worship. The highest mountain on Earth, Mt. Everest, is found in China and is part of the Tibetan Himalayas. Additionally, a number of deserts, including the Taklamakan Desert and the Gobi Desert, are described as the "desert of death." According to Nijman et al. (p357), China possesses coal deposits in the coal-fired energy system employed throughout the country. Western and northeastern regions have the most oil resources.

⁹ The South-to-North Water Diversion Project (SNWDP) in China is one of the most notable landscape changes. It transports water across basins worldwide. According to Nijman's

research, an effort is underway to bring water to northern China's polluted and drought-stricken cities (Zhao et al., 2017). The Great Wall of China and the Grand Canal are only two examples of how humans have shaped the landscape via building. They were constructed with the intention of terracing slopes on hills, utilizing water for irrigation, and reclaiming land on the margins of cultivation. China has put tremendous effort into reclaiming underutilized land and using it for agriculture.

The terrain of China makes expansion difficult, which is one issue it faces. China's development is constrained by the forests on its borders with Thailand, Vietnam, and Myanmar. Because there is an opportunity for growth in the east toward the Pacific, north, and south, providing Japan more edge over China, it cannot expand to its western region. Furthermore, because of their ongoing deployments, China's neighbours South Korea, Japan, and Korea assert control of China's islands (Nijman et al., 2016). Another issue is that due to its inability to maintain agriculture and intense cold, China's western region is only just suitable for human habitation. Between China's coastline region and central heartland, there are significant geographical variances.

Geographical Assets of South Asia

South Asia continent extends to the south of ³ the Indian Ocean. The main boundaries delineating South Asia are Afghanistan, the Himalayas and the Indian Ocean. The Bengal Bay in the east separates the two countries: Bangladesh and Pakistan. The Himalayas is the most significant geographical asset in northern South Asia (Nijman et al., 2016). The mountain is a major tourist destination and is used for tourism and recreational purposes. Besides, the Himalayas mountains are an asset since they provide natural resources, including medicinal plants, minerals, and plants and have the ability to produce hydroelectric power. The Himalayas

provide a natural barrier, add to the area's visual appeal, and support diverse wildlife. The Indus, Ganges, and Brahmaputra rivers comprise the lush Indo-Gangetic lowlands, home to a sizable population and substantial agricultural activity (Rasul, 2018). Additionally, the territory has sizable coastline lands along the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, giving access to important marine resources.

Bhutan, Nepal, India, and Pakistan border the Himalayas. India, Pakistan, and China share Kashmir north of the Himalayas. Two island nations off southern India's coast are opposite the Himalayas. The Himalayas separate these countries. Sri Lanka is a large tropical island off India's southeast coast, and the Republic of Maldives is an archipelago off India's southwest coast (Rasul, 2018). The Maldives have 1,200 islands, the highest of which is seven feet and seven inches above sea level. Islands barely rise above the water. Maldives has 200 inhabited islands.

Human capital is an important resource in South Asia; countries with massive populations, such as India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, operate similarly to capital in terms of adding to their overall GDP because of their enormous populations. In addition to this, they possess a substantial quantity of naturally occurring resources. The land has fertile soils and is highly concentrated with agricultural activities, especially in the North Indian plains and the Brahmaputra delta. This has led to the expansion of agricultural land for crop farming and livestock production. Besides, India has valuable minerals, including copper, gold and other resources. These countries have a sizable potential for growth in the years to come since they are consistently ranked highly among those that draw the greatest foreign direct investment and foreign portfolio investment. Since there are so many young individuals there, they have a comparatively low dependence ratio. Due to their rich historical cultures, these countries

frequently attract tourists, especially from India, which is one of the most efficient ways to build up foreign reserves.

South Asia highly acknowledges and values biodiversity. For instance, the region supports tropical rainforests, grasslands, mangrove forests and high-altitude animal habitats. It also supports different wildlife, such as Indian and Bengal tigers, several bird species and rhinoceroses with single horns. This biodiversity sustains local livelihoods and the natural equilibrium. South Asia has a rich cultural heritage. Historical sites, temples, and churches are popular in the area. India's Taj Mahal, Pakistan's Mohenjo-daro, and Cambodia's Angkor Wat showcase the region's architecture. South Asia's literature, music, dance, and other arts reflect its cultural diversity.

Problems and limitations

These nations continue to view their enormous populations as a problem that prevents them from using their citizens to their full potential. There are several problems in this area, including terrorism, insurgency, naxalism, etc. These problems frequently impede the progress of development. Since these nations frequently place highly on the corruption perception index, corruption also plays a significant role. Different religions are assimilated, but because of this, these nations frequently experience war. There are over 1.5 billion people living in South Asia who come from a diverse spectrum of ethnic and cultural groupings. Political organizations with roots in the realm's colonial heritage, particularly under Great Britain, have been created to bring the diverse populace together. The realm was significantly impacted by British colonialism; its long-term impacts include political tensions and divisions in countries like Kashmir and Sri Lanka.

Just like Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia is a region that has experienced the consequences of vulnerable climate change (Rasul, 2018). The vulnerability has exposed South Asia to increased poverty and mortality rates as well as increased costs of agricultural commodities. These effects are made worse by social exclusion, as vulnerable people are frequently economically disadvantaged and disproportionately exposed to dangers. Furthermore, these populations frequently lack access to the knowledge and resources necessary to respond to and recover from catastrophes appropriately.

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