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Q7

Why is the South-West monsoon called 'Purvaiya' (easterly) in Bhojpur Region? How has this directional seasonal wind system influenced the cultural ethos of the region?

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2023 · GS I · 10 marks · Geophysical Phenomena

Important Geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes, tsunami, volcanic activity, cyclone etc., geographical features and their location-changes in critical geographical features (including water-bodies and ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes.

Core demand of the question

- Why is the South-West monsoon called **Purvaiya** (easterly) in **Bhojpur Region**?
- How has this directional seasonal wind system influenced the cultural ethos of the region?

Revision summary

The Bay of Bengal monsoon current is deflected westward up the **Ganga plain**.

In Bhojpur that rain wind arrives from the east and is named **Purvaiya**.

The Arabian Sea south-westerly is not the local rain-bringer here.

Rice, flood, ghats, and Bhojpuri rain songs grew around this seasonal easterly.

Culture and monsoon meteorology are one story in this region.

Introduction

In the Bhojpuri belt of western Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh, the rain-bearing monsoon often arrives as a moist wind from the east. People therefore call that current **Purvaiya**, even though the larger Indian monsoon is named south-west.

Body

Why the monsoon is **Purvaiya here**

- The Arabian Sea branch of the south-west monsoon moves inland from the west and south-west, but the **Bay of Bengal branch** strikes the Eastern Himalaya and the Meghalaya-Bengal wall.
- After that strike, a large part of the Bay current is deflected up the **Ganga plain** as a rain-bearing easterly or south-easterly flow.
- Bhojpur, Buxar, Ara, Ballia, Ghazipur, and neighbouring districts sit where this deflected Bay current, not the dry westerly loo, brings the main kharif rain.
- Local speech therefore names the welcome wet wind **Purvaiya**, meaning the easterly, which is a ground name for a deflected south-west monsoon current.
- When the **Purvaiya** is late or weak, paddy and the flood pulse of the Ganga, Ghaghara, and Son fail together, so the name is a climate fact, not a poetic extra.

Influence on cultural ethos

- Wet-rice, sugarcane, and later wheat in a floodplain calendar shaped festivals, work songs, and the waiting for rain in Bhojpuri folk such as **kajri and malhar**.
- Boat culture, river ghats, and settlement on slightly higher mounds grew because the same easterly rain also means sheet flood and silt.
- Chhath and other river-facing rites in the wider region treat the sun and the river as part of a monsoon agrarian year, even when the exact date is post-monsoon.
- Language, birha, and migration songs record men leaving after harvest, which is a social answer to a densely peopled, flood-prone rice tract.
- Food, thatch, and courtyard life assume humidity and clay, so the ethos is of a wet plain, not of a rain-shadow plateau.

Way forward for the explanation

- Keep the meteorology (Bay deflection) and the culture (rice, flood, song, river rite) on the same wind, or the two parts of the question fall apart.

Flow diagram

Bay of Bengal branch -> Eastern Himalaya Bengal wall
Eastern Himalaya Bengal wall -> Easterly into Ganga plain
Easterly into Ganga plain -> Purvaiya in Bhojpur
Purvaiya in Bhojpur -> Rice flood song river rites

Conclusion

The south-west monsoon is called **Purvaiya** in Bhojpur because the Bay branch reaches this plain as an easterly rain wind. That seasonal direction still shapes rice, flood, river rites, and Bhojpuri song, and climate planning here must treat the **Purvaiya** as both weather and culture.

Facts & figures

Bhojpur region

Western Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh around Bhojpur, Buxar, Ara, Ballia, and Ghazipur.

Bay of Bengal branch

South-west monsoon current that strikes eastern India and turns up the **Ganga plain**.

Purvaiya

Local name for the moist easterly that brings kharif rain to this belt.

Ganga-Ghaghara-Son

Rivers whose flood and silt pulse is tied to the same monsoon season.

Kajri and malhar

Bhojpuri and north Indian rain songs that treat the easterly wet wind as a social event.

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