

**ECONTENT - for M.A Semester III (2020)**  
**Core Course 13, Unit IV**  
**Whittlesey's Classification of Agricultural Region .**

By

**Dr. Anuradha Sahay**

**Professor**

**Department of Geography**

.....  
Whittlesey's scheme outlines the following ten types of agricultural practices . They are :-

1. Nomadic Herding
2. Livestock Ranching
3. Commercial Dairy Farming
4. Commercial Crop and Livestock Farming
5. Commercial Grain Farming
6. Commercial Plantation
7. Commercial Gardening:
8. Mediterranean Agriculture
9. Shifting Cultivation
- !0.. Intensive Subsistence Cultivation

**1. Nomadic Herding:**

Nomadic herding is practised in the drylands of Sahara, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asia, Mongolia and China. Nomadic herding is also practised in south-west Africa, western Madagascar and along the southern boundary of the Tundra region in Eurasia where the Tundra reindeer.

This type of economic activity is characterised by a frequent change of habitation in search of animal fodder, fruits, nuts, edible roots, trading opportunities, etc. The migration may **even be of 'seasonal'** nature. For instance, the Tundras move northwards to mountains during summer and southwards to forests during winter. Similarly, the Gujjars of Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh move to upper altitudes during summer and to the plains during winter.

## **2. Livestock Ranching:**

Livestock ranching is undertaken in the vast prairies of western USA and western Canada, central Mexico, the belt from Venezuela to Argentina, the veld region of South Africa, temperate grasslands of Australia and New Zealand, and the region to the north of Caspian Sea.

In agricultural regions of this type, cattle rearing is done in relatively rainy parts, sheep are reared in less rainy parts and goats and camels are reared in low rainfall and warmer regions.

## **3. Commercial Dairy Farming:**

Commercial dairy farming type is practised on the western shores of France, the UK and Ireland, the Great Lakes region and the north-west in the USA, south-eastern Australia and in New Zealand.

These areas receive rainfall throughout the year and produce good quality, nourishing grass. Mainly cattle and poultry are reared. These regions are known for good quality milk products—cheese, butter etc., which are even exported.

#### **4. Commercial Crop and Livestock Farming:**

This type of agriculture is practised in temperate and dry continental climates of central European plains and to the east of the Urals up to Lake Baikal.

These areas are mostly influenced by the westerlies; hence, the rainfall is low in summers. Major crops grown are oats, barley, rye, flax, potatoes and other root crops, and wheat. Vineyards are also important.

#### **5. Commercial Grain Farming**

This type of agricultural operations is undertaken in the Great Plains of North America, Uruguay, Argentina and the Eurasian Middle-East.

This type is distinguished from the type mentioned in item 4, mainly by the type of crop produced and the degree to which the crop enters commercial and international market.

#### **6. Commercial Plantation:**

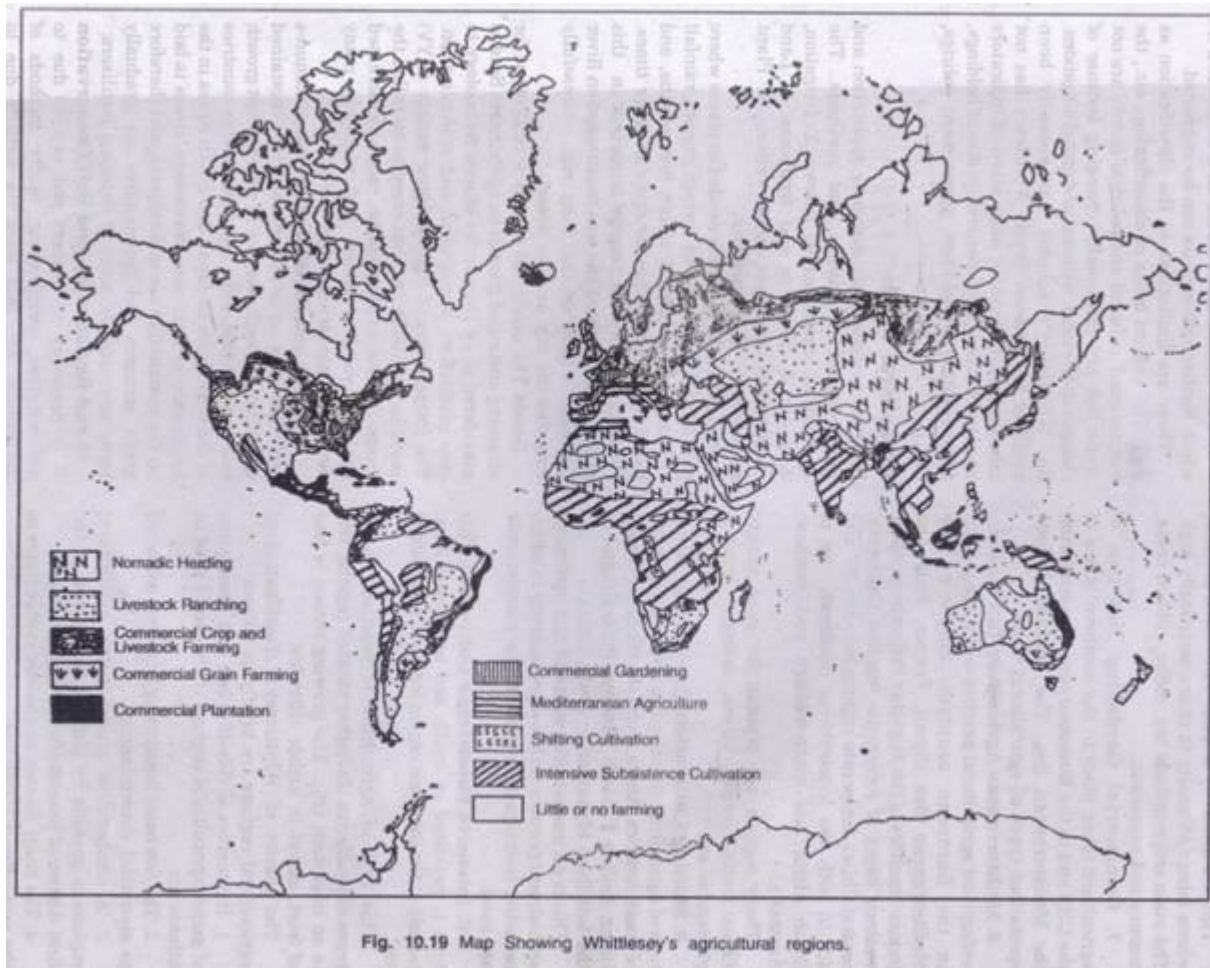
This type of agricultural activity occurs in south-east Asia (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines), Sri Lanka, West Africa, south and central USA, and Central America.

This is a distinctly tropical cultivation practice, where labour intensity is characteristically high.

The main crops include tea, coffee, rubber, cocoa, coconut and sugarcane.

## **7. Commercial Gardening:**

This type of agriculture takes place in the southern states of the USA and in the European countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea. The products include specialised types of agricultural crops.



## **8. Mediterranean Agriculture:**

This is a fairly widespread agricultural practice which takes place in the European countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea (Spain,

France, Italy and former republics of the Yugoslav Federation), along western edges of continents (central California, central Chile), temperate regions between 30° and 40° in both the hemispheres (southern tip of South Africa and south-western and southern Australia).

These regions are reputed for good quality citrus fruits—grapes, olives, oranges, lemons, pineapples etc.

### **9. Shifting Cultivation:**

This is a subsistence type of agriculture practised in forested highlands of South America, Africa, India (North-East, Orissa, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh) and in the belt from Myanmar to south China.

This is an unscientific, wasteful and inefficient agricultural practice with low productivity in which primitive techniques and rudimentary implements are used.

### **!0. Intensive Subsistence Cultivation:**

This type is practised in south and south-east Asia, mainly in the monsoon region with red and alluvial soil.

This type of agriculture is practised in all types of landforms. In higher rainfall regions, rice is an important crop. The growing season is free of frost, except in higher altitudes. The merits of Whittlesey's classification of agricultural regions are briefly as follows:

1. It provides a classification and description of major agricultural regions of the world used in atlases etc.

2. The five basic functioning forms are subjected to statistical determination.
3. A comparative study of the agricultural regions is possible by plotting the system of the first degree of magnitude on a single map.
4. The study focuses on the observable items in the agricultural landscape. .
5. The classification serves as a framework in which further refinements can be suggested.

There are limitations to the classification as well. The various bases of classification, viz., the institutional, cultural and political factors are not static but are continually changing because of changes in the local, national and global situations. So, Whittlesey's scheme has recently been modified by Thoman Fryer. Whittlesey has not taken into consideration some relevant indicators like land tenancy, land ownership, size of holdings, fragmentation of holdings, government policies, etc.