

Animal Life

The most varied kinds of animals, birds, fish and insects live in these amazing forests! The luxuriant vegetation and the warm climate have supported this variety of fauna which are diverse and unique in their own way. They are found to exist in the different levels of the forests.

The animals living on the trees are the **gorillas**, **chimpanzees**, **orangutans**, **monkeys**, **sloths**, **flying foxes** and **lemurs**. Other animals include the **hippopotamus** in Africa, **jaguars** in the Amazon, in South America, **elephant** and **rhinos**.

The animals living in the rivers and swamps are reptiles such as **alligators**, **crocodiles** and **snakes**, such as **anacondas** and **pythons**.

Fish such as the **piranha**—flesh eating—**jellyfish** and are teeming in the numerous rivers here.

A variety of vibrant birds with their colourful feathers and plumes adorn these forests, like the **macaw**, **hornbill**, **parrots** and the **toucan**.

tribes lead a nomadic life. They take care of the forest and do not harm it since their needs are fulfilled by it.

In the less dense forested areas, the people practise the **slash and burn cultivation** or **shifting agriculture**. Tapioca, yam, banana, maize and sweet potatoes are some of the crops grown by them.

Shifting Agriculture

- A part of the forest is cleared and the trees are burnt down.
- Crops are grown for two or three years.
- When the fertility of the soil decreases, the tribals move to a new area and carry out the same process.

Find out where is this method carried out in India!

In the last few centuries, the Europeans established their colonies in many of these equatorial countries. They introduced a very specialised farming technique called **plantation agriculture**. Huge forest areas were taken over by them and cleared. These areas were planted with either **tea, rubber, cocoa** or **coffee**, to be provided to the European markets. As a result, these tribal people started living a settled life and were provided with modern facilities like schools, hospitals, electricity, transport, and so on. The population increased and the living conditions improved. So plantation agriculture is a method where **a single cash crop** is grown **on a large scale** for the **purpose of sale**.

Mining is also carried out in some of these areas, which was again started by the Europeans. **Copper and diamonds** in the Congo Basin, **tin** in Malaysia, and **petroleum** in Java (Indonesia), are some of the minerals mined.

Life of the people in these forests, in general, is not easy. They wander from place to place in search of **food, water** and **pasture** for their animals. They live in **make shift, dwellings** made out of branches, leaves and grass. Transportation is difficult since the forests are dense and so the rivers form the **communication routes**. Several **harmful insects** cause diseases such as **malaria, yellow fever** and **sleeping sickness**.

Some Primitive Tribes of the Equatorial Rainforests

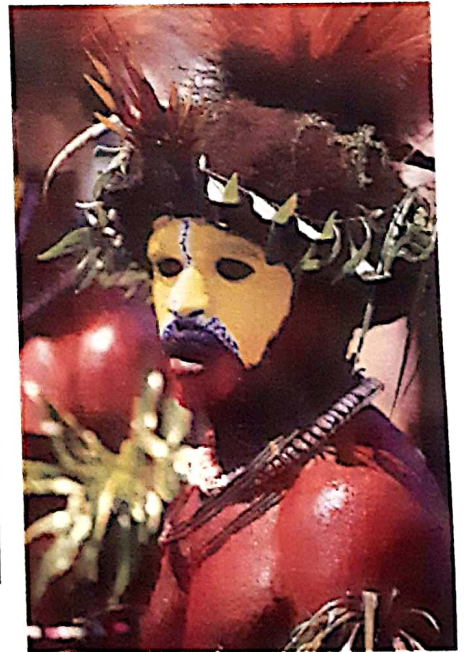
Name of Tribe	Distribution	Life Style
Yanomami	Brazil, South America	They live in villages in groups of 50 to 400. The entire village lives under a common roof called shabono —an oval shaped structure, open in the centre and is made of leaves, vines and tree trunks. They practise slash and burn agriculture growing bananas, mangoes, papaya, etc. They also practise hunting, gathering and fishing.
Pygmies	Congo Basin, Africa	The shortest people in the world, they live by hunting and gathering. All their needs are supplied by the forests—bows and arrows from trees, shelters from branches and leaves and clothes from animal skin and leaves.
Huli	Papua New Guinea	They live in clans . Men and women live in separate quarters. The men hunt and gather food, while the women cultivate the land—while the women cultivate the land-slash and burn method. They decorate their bodies with coloured clay and wear elaborate head dresses.
Semang	Malaysia, S.E. Asia	They are nomadic hunter-gatherers. They live in caves and leaf shelters. They gather fruit and roots and hunt small animals. They live in small groups.



Semang dwelling



Shabono



Huli Wigman

Answer the following questions.

- 1) Name some animals living in the equatorial rainforest.
- 2) Name the flesh-eating fish in the equatorial rainforest.
- 3) What are the activities of the tribes in equatorial rainforest?
- 4) Name some crops grown by the tribes of equatorial rainforest.
- 5) Name the minerals mined in the Congo Basin, Malaysia and Java.
- 6) Why rivers form the communication routes in equatorial rainforest?