

Chapter- 5

DRC - The Land of Dense Forest

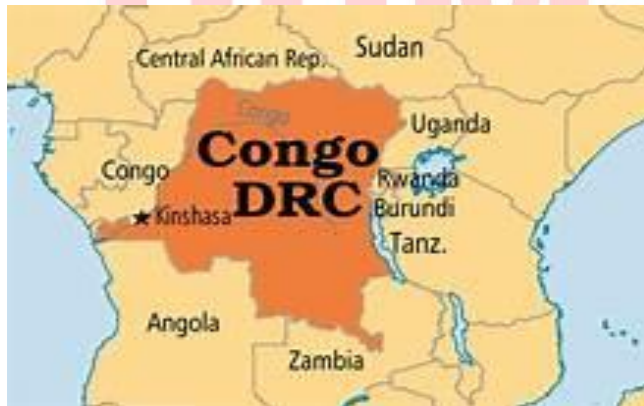
STUDY NOTES

Let's Learn

The equator runs through the centre of the earth. The regions located on both sides of the equator are known as the **equatorial regions**. The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) lies in the equatorial region. Let us learn about the country in detail to know about life in the equatorial region.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is the second largest country in Africa. It was formerly known as Zaire. Its capital is **Kinshasa**.



Location

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) or Congo (Kinshasa) is a country situated in central Africa.

The DRC shares its boundaries with countries-

- Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and Tanzania in the east.
- Republic of Congo in the west
- Central African Republic and South Sudan in the north.

- Zambia and Angola in the south.

Land and water bodies



The northeastern part of the DRC has the Ruwenzori mountains. The Mount Margherita is the highest peak of this range.

The eastern part of the DRC has four major lakes. These are Lakes Albert, Edward, Kivu, and Tanganyika.

The **Congo** River is the second longest river of Africa. It is known as the **Highway of Central Africa**.

Climate

The DRC has hot and wet climate throughout the year. The region receives direct rays of the sun, so there is little variation in the summer and winter seasons. The days and night are almost equal in length.

High temperature and humidity cause clouds to build up, resulting in heavy rainfall. The region receives rainfall every evening. This rainfall is known as **4o'clock rainfall**.

Vegetation

The DRC is rich in vegetation. The trees here are tall and form a thick **canopy** at the top. Even sunlight cannot penetrate through it. There is thick undergrowth of shrubs and bushes. Most of the trees have creepers growing around them. The trees include mahogany, ebony, redwood, rosewood, rubber, and bamboo. All trees do not shed their leaves at the same time. Thus, the forest looks green throughout the year, and hence, are called the tropical **evergreen forests**.



Wildlife

The forests of the DRC are rich in wildlife. Animals, such as gorillas, lions, hyenas, hippopotamus, rhinoceros, elephants, snakes, and crocodiles, are found here. A wide variety of birds, such as pelicans, ducks, eagles, and owls, are also found in these forests. Due to a great diversity in wildlife, the DRC is also called the natural zoo of the world.



Economy

The people of the DRC are engaged in forestry, fishing, cattle rearing, and agriculture. Their main occupation is agriculture. The methods of agriculture are traditional and primitive. The main crops grown here are cassava, maize, banana, and rice. **Cassava** is the staple food of the people in this region. A few cash crops, like cocoa, coffee, tobacco, rubber, oil palm, and cotton, are also grown here.

The DRC has huge deposits of gold, diamond, copper, cobalt, manganese, and tin. Therefore, many people are engaged in mining. Most of the minerals are exported to other countries. Other industries in the DRC are of textiles, tobacco, and petroleum products. They are located in major cities of Kinshasa, Lubumbashi, Brazzaville, and Matadi.

Transport

It is difficult to build roads and railways on land with such dense forests, therefore, only some parts of the country have roads and railways. However, the country has a good network of rivers, thus, making water the chief mode of transport. Air transport is also very efficient in this region.

Life of the People

The DRC is thinly populated. Most of the people of the DRC live in the rural areas. Majority of the population belongs to the **Bantu** tribe. The Bantu people are tall and have curly hair.

Deep in the forests of the DRC live many groups of **Pygmies**. Bambuti or Mbuti, a group of pygmies, is one of the most primitive tribes in the world. These people are very short in height. They are good hunters and still lead a nomadic life.

Like most of the countries of Asia and Africa, the DRC is progressing fast. The people of the region are adopting the modern ways of living. Thus, it is on the road to progress and development.



**Democratic
Republic of
Congo**

Lies in the equatorial region; hot and humid climate

Rich in flora and fauna

Forestry, fishing, cattle rearing, agriculture, and mining

Thinly populated country

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Changing your Tomorrow

Let's know more**Multiple choice questions**

✧ From 1971 to 1997, DRC was known as

- a. Zaire b. Belgian Congo c. Congo-Kinshasa d. Congo Free State

✧ In the part of DRC near the Equator, it rains

- a. During the rainy season---June to September
b. During winter---October to February
c. Almost every day throughout the year
d. Does not rain at all as it is very hot

✧ Other than tropical rain forests, DRC also has

- a. Grasslands b. deserts c. snow covered lands d. salt water lakes

✧ Sleeping sickness is caused by:

- a. Housefly b. tsetse fly c. cockroach d. flea

✧ The main source of income of DRC is:

- a. Tourism b. export of minerals and agriculture produce
c. export of goods produced in large factories d. export of meat products

Let's Do**A. Fill in the blanks.**

1. The capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo is _____.
2. DRC is situated in the Tropical Zone, in the continent of _____.
3. The longest river of DRC is _____.
4. Most of DRC is covered with _____ forests.

5. Vegetation consisting of grasslands with short trees is known as a _____.

B. Write T for true and F for false sentences.

1. Most inhabitants of present day DRC are pygmies.
2. Most people in DRC live in cities.
3. It rains almost every day in the tropical rain forests of DRC.
4. Savannas are grasslands.
5. DRC exports most of its minerals.
6. Pygmies settle down in villages and grow crops.

Understand and Answer

C. Answer the following questions.

1. What was/is DRC known as: (a) before 1971, (b) between 1971 and 1997, (c) at present?
2. What kind of climate does DRC have?
3. Describe a tropical rainforest.
4. Why is most of the DRC covered with tropical rain forests?
5. What is a savanna? Which parts of the DRC have this type of vegetation?
6. Name four animals found in plenty in the tropical rain forests, and four found in the savannas.
7. Which dangerous insect present in the forests of the DRC causes sleeping sickness?
8. Describe the way pygmies live.

Teacher's Note

Besides Zaire, the DRC has also been known as Belgian Congo, Congo - Leopoldville and Congo-Kinshasa

Improve your G.K

- ◆ Who owned Congo Free State as personal fief? (Leopold II)
- ◆ Which is the currency of DRC? (Franc)

- ◆ Which is the official language of DRC? (French)
- ◆ How was Kinshasa formerly known? (Leopoldville)
- ◆ Who was Congo (D.R.)'s first prime minister? (Patrice Lumumba)

ANSWER KEY***Let's know more*****Multiple choice questions**

- ✧ a. Zaire
- ✧ c. Almost everyday throughout the year
- ✧ a. grasslands
- ✧ b. Tsetse fly
- ✧ b. Export of minerals and agriculture produce

Let's Do

A. 1. Kinshasa

2. Africa

3. Congo River

4. Tropical rain forests

5. Savanna

B.1. T

2. F

3. T

4. T

5. T

6. T

Understand and Answer

- C.1. a. Before 1971, DRC is known as Belgian Congo.
- b. Between 1971 and 1997, DRC is known as Zaire.
- c. A present DRC is known as Democratic Republic of Congo.
2. DRC have hot climate through out the year.
3. In a tropical rainforest - trees are covered with leaves throughout the year.
- the trees are tall and form a canopy of leaves at the top.
 - creepers, climbers and shrubs grow below.
4. Most of the DRC is covered with tropical rain forests because the climate of DRC is ideal for the growth of dense forests called tropical rain forests.
5. Savanna - a large flat area of grassland with scattered trees, found in warm parts.
- the southern part of DRC have Savanna.
6. Four animals found in tropical rain forests - elephants, buffaloes, gorillas, baboons.
- Four animals found in Savannas - lions, leopards, giraffes, zebras.
7. Tsetse fly is the dangerous insect present in the forests of the DRC causes sleeping sickness.
8. i. Pygmies are short in height.
- ii. They get their food by hunting animals and gathering plant foods.
 - iii. They live in camps for few weeks.
 - iv. They make huts out of branches and leaves.
 - v. On special occasions they wear colourful costumes.
 - vi. They enjoy singing, dancing and telling stories.