

Class 8
History chapter 4
Tribals, Dikus and the Vision of a Golden Age

Q.1 Fill in the blanks :-

- (a) The British described the tribal people as wild and savage.
- (b) the method of sowing seeds in jhum cultivation is known as broadcasting the seeds.
- (c) The tribal chiefs got land titles in Central India under the British land settlements.
- (d) tribals went to work in the tea plantation of Assam and the coal mines in Bihar.

Q.2 state whether true or false:-

- (a) Jhum cultivators plough the land and sow the seeds.

Ans. **True**

- (b) Cocoons were bought from Santhals and sold by traders as five times the purchase price.

Ans. **True**

- (c) Birsa urged his followers to purify themselves, give up drinking liquor and stop believing in witchcraft and sorcery.

Ans. **True**

- (d) The British wanted to preserve the tribal way of life.

Ans. **False**

Q.3 Answer these questions:-

Q.1 What problems did shifting cultivators face under British rule?

Ans. the British were not comfortable with shifting cultivators as they wanted them to settle down and become peasant cultivators. It was so because the settled to peasants were easier to administer and would become a regular source of revenue for the state. So, they were declared as landowner and some became tenants. But, settled plough cultivation is not easy in those area where water is in scarcity. Jhum cultivators had to suffer a lot while option for plough cultivation because their fields were not fertile. Therefore the jhum cultivators of North-East asserted on continuing shifting practices. When protest started to spread, the British finally allowed them to carry on shifting cultivation.

Q.2 How did the power of tribal chiefs change under colonial rule?

Ans. Tribal chiefs had certain economic and administrative powers before the arrival of the British. Some tribal chief had their own laws and policies to maintain such laws. But, the power of tribal chiefs changed under the colonial rule. Although they were permitted to keep land titles over a group of villages and were free to give their lands on rent, they lost most of their administrative powers and were pushed to comply with laws made by the British in India. The tribal chiefs also had to pay testimonials to the British and they had to control the tribal groups on behalf of the British. They lost their control over the people and their traditional functions.

Q.3 What accounts for the anger of the tribals against the Dikus?

Ans. (I) Tribal life is predominantly based upon forests. The British extended their administration and declared the forests as state property. Tribals were restricted to move freely in these forests and use forest products. Therefore many tribal people had to move out of the forests in search of livelihood.

(II) The colonial officials decided that jhum cultivators would be given small patches of land in the forests and would be allowed to cultivate, if they provided labour to the Forest Department. In this way, the colonial officials got regular supply of cheap labour. Many tribal groups were angry with this and they disobeyed the new rules, carried on their practices and at times, rose in open rebellion against the Dikus.

Q.4 What was Birsa's vision of a golden age? Why do you think such a vision of appealed to the people of the region?

Ans. Birsa always talked about the golden age in the past, i.e., the satyug. His vision of the golden age was when the Mundas will live a good life. He thought about an age in which they would not kill their Brethren and relatives, and live honestly. This vision of Birsa appealed to the people of the region because they wanted to settle down in life. They also wanted that they should have a good life, they should not kill their brothers and relatives and they should live with honesty. When anyone shows them dreams of golden age to the people, then it is bound to appeal to the people of the region. Hence, he became the leader of the Munda people of the region.