

NCERT Solutions for Class 9 History

Chapter 4 - Forest Society and Colonialism

NCERT TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS WITH ANSWERS

Q. 1. Discuss the changes in forest management in the colonial period affected the following groups of people:

- (i) Shifting cultivators.
- (ii) Nomadic and pastoralist communities,
- (iii) Firms trading in timber/forest produce.
- (iv) Plantation owners.
- (v) Kings/British officials engaged in Shikar.

Ans. (ii) Shifting Cultivators: Due to change in laws of forest management shifting cultivation was banned. It was argued the land which was used for shifting cultivation every few years could not grow trees for railway timber.

(ii) Nomadic and Pastoralist Communities: The life of nomadic and pastoralist communities was affected because they were not allowed to enter the protected forest areas. Moreover, the trade in forest produce was banned and this resulted in a huge loss of income to these communities, as it was through trade transactions that they earned their livelihood.

(iii) Firms trading in timber/forest produce: Most of the firms trading in timber and forest produce were highly benefited with the changes in forest management. The new laws favored them and they generated huge revenue.

(iv) Plantation owners: Plantation Owners was another section that earned great profits in their business. The deforestation led to the development of plantations of coffee, tea and rubber. And these businessmen got cheap labour from forest communities, thus the plantation owners had to invest very less. As plantation goods were in huge demand, the businessmen in plantations earned great profits. They also got favors from changed forest management laws.

(v) Kings/British officials engaged in Shikar: Although hunting was prohibited, but with discrimination. Kings/British officials indulged in excess hunting. They had the silent permission from the British government and did hunting in the name of civilizing India, as British saw large animals as signs of a wild, primitive and savage society.

Q. 2. What are the similarities between colonial management of the forests in Bastar and in Java?

Ans. The colonial management of forests in Bastar and Java had the following similarities:

- (i) Hunting was prohibited.
- (ii) Trees were cut for railways and shipbuilding.
- (iii) Forest communities were suppressed when they rose in rebellion.
- (iv) Nomads and pastoralists were banned to enter the forest area.
- (v) Trade in forest produce was banned.
- (vi) European firms were given permits for deforestation and plantation industry.
- (vii) Forest communities had to work as free labourers for the forest management, or they had to pay rent to live there.

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Q.3. Between 1880 and 1920, forest cover in the Indian sub-continent declined by 9.7 million hectares, from 108.6 million, hectares to 98.9 million hectares. Discuss the role of following factors in this decline:

- (i) Railways
- (ii) Ship-buildings
- (iii) Agricultural Expansion
- (iv) Commercial Farming
- (v) Tea /Coffee plantations
- (vi) Adivasis and other peasant users.

Ans. (i) Railways:

- (a) To run locomotives, wood was needed as fuel and
- (b) to lay railway lines sleepers were essential to hold the tracks together. As the railway tracks spread throughout India, a larger and larger number of trees were felled. Forests around the railway tracks fast started disappearing.

(ii) Ship-building:

- (a) Shortage of oak forests created a great timber problem for the ship-building of England.
- (b) For the Royal Navy, large wooden boats, ships, courtyards for the shipping etc.
- (c) Trees from the Indian forests were being cut on a massive scale from 1820s or 1830s to export large quantities of timber from India.
- (d) Naturally forest cover of the subcontinent declined rapidly.

(iii) Agricultural Expansion:

- (a) Increasing population, urbanization, increasing foreign trade, demand of commercial crops and decline of small scale and cottage industries inspired the peasants to expand their agricultural area
- (b) The colonial government's wrong policies also promoted agricultural expansion.
- (c) The foreign government did not take needed-useful steps for intensive agriculture. This also supported directly or indirectly the disappearance of forests in India.

(iv) Commercial Farming:

- (a) Large areas of natural forests were also cleared to make for plantations or commercial farming.
- (b) Jute, rubber, indigo, tobacco etc. commercial crops were planted to meet Britain's growing need for these commodities.
- (c) The colonial government (the British government) took over the forests, and game of vast area and exported their product to Europe.

(v) Tea/Coffee Plantations:

- (a) For tea and coffee planters at cheap rates, the hilly areas were given.
- (b) These areas were enclosed and cleared of forests, and planted with tea or coffee.

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(vi) Adivasis and other peasant-users:

- (a) Adivasi and other peasant-users also participated in deforestation.
- (b) They used to cut the trees whenever they get chances for their personal use or to obtain things for sale or for their own animals, etc.

Q. 4. Why are forests affected by wars?

Ans. 1. Second World War had a major impact on forests. In India, working plans were abandoned at this time, and the forest department cut forests freely to meet British war needs.

2. In Java, just before the Japanese occupied (during the days of the Second World War) the region, the Dutch (the people of Holland are called the Dutch) followed 'a scorched earth' policy destroying saw mills and burning huge piles of giant teak logs.

3. Many Adivasis, peasants and other users use wars and battles opportunities to expand cultivation in the forest.

4. After the war, it was difficult for the Indonesian (before the occupation of Japanese) forest service to get this land (forestland) back.

5. In India, people's need for agricultural land has brought them into conflict with the forest department's desire to control the land and exclude people from there.