

NCERT SOLUTIONS

CLASS - 8TH



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Class : 8th

Subject : History

Chapter : 4

Chapter Name : Tribals, Dikus and the Vision of a Golden Age

Q1 Fill in the blanks:

- (a) The British described the tribal people as _____.
- (b) The method of sowing seeds in jhum cultivation is known as _____.
- (c) The tribal chiefs got _____ titles in central India under the British land settlements.
- (d) Tribals went to work in the _____ of Assam and the _____ in Bihar.

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

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Q2 State whether true or false:

- (a) Jhum cultivators plough the land and sow seeds.
- (b) Cocoons were bought from the Santhals and sold by the traders at five times the purchase price.
- (c) Birsa urged his followers to purify themselves, give up drinking liquor and stop believing in witchcraft and sorcery.
- (d) The British wanted to preserve the tribal way of life.

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

False

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

True

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

True

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

False

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Q3 What problems did shifting cultivators face under British rule?

Answer. For administrative and economic reasons, the British government tried settling the jhum or shifting cultivators. However, settled plough cultivation did not prove to be helpful to these jhum cultivators. They often suffered because their fields did not produce good yields. The new forest laws also affected the lives of the shifting cultivators. Shifting or jhum cultivation is usually done on small patches of land. Under the forest laws, the British extended their control over all forests and declared that forests were state property. Thus, the jhum cultivators were prevented from practising jhum cultivation freely. Many were forced to move to other areas in search of work and livelihood.

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Q4 How did the powers of tribal chiefs change under colonial rule?

Answers. Under colonial rule, the functions and powers of the tribal chiefs changed considerably. Though they were allowed to keep their land titles over a cluster of villages and rent out lands, the administrative, judicial and economic powers they enjoyed before the arrival of the British were no longer in force. They were required to follow the British laws, pay tribute to the British and discipline the tribal groups on behalf of the colonial masters. As a result, they lost the authority they had earlier enjoyed among their people, and were unable to fulfil their traditional functions.

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Q5 What accounts for the anger of the tribals against the dikus?

Answers. The word "dikus" means outsiders. Dikus were the people who made the tribal people dependent upon them, thereby causing them a lot of misery and suffering. These outsiders were composed of traders and moneylenders who would come into the forests to sell the goods not produced within the forest, buy forest produce and offer cash loans. Often these loans came at the price of very high rates of interest. These loans ultimately forced the tribals into a vicious cycle of debt and poverty. The traders would buy goods from the tribals at very low rates and sell the same products at high prices, thereby making huge profits. For these reasons, the tribals considered the trader and the moneylender figures to be their main enemies; hence, they referred to them as the evil outsiders. The colonial government too was looked upon as an external evil force that sought to destroy their livelihoods and their familiar ways of life. The British alienated

the tribals by forcing shifting cultivators to practise settled cultivation; implementing forest laws to prevent their access to the forest land and the forest produce; demeaning the power and authority of tribal chiefs, and demanding tributes. As a result, there was considerable anger towards the British as well.

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Q6 What was Birsa's vision of a golden age? Why do you think such a vision appealed to the people of the region?

Answer. Birsa talked about a golden age, a satyug, an age of truth in which, like in the past, the tribal people would live a good life, construct embankments, tap natural springs, plant trees and orchards and practise cultivation to earn their living. He talked of an age in which the tribals would not kill one another and would live an honest life. His golden age consisted of a reformed tribal society in which there was no place for vices like liquor, uncleanliness, witchcraft and sorcery, and outside forces like the missionaries, Hindu landlords, moneylenders, traders and the Europeans. This vision was appealing to the tribal people as all the vices and outside forces that Birsa talked about were indeed thought of by everyone as the root causes of their misery and suffering.

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Q7 Find out from your parents, friends or teachers, the names of some heroes of other tribal revolts in the twentieth century. Write their story in your own words.

Answers. Jatra Oraon: (i) He was a tribal freedom fighter from the Chotanagpur region in the present day state of Jharkhand. During his leadership Oraon movement against the British colonial rule during 1914-19.

(ii) He fought for Oraon Raj. He criticised liquor drinking and superstitious practices among Oraons. His religious movement gave way to a "no-rent payment" campaign. Jatra declared that his followers should stop ploughing the field of landlords and not work anymore as coolies or labourers for non-Oraons or for the government.

(iii) He also questioned the traditional leadership of the pahans and mahtos the village headmen. The basic idea behind this movement was that land was a gift of God and that no one had the right to interfere with the tribals right over land.

(iv) Jatra, along with his leading disciples was arrested in 1914. After his release, he abandoned the leadership of the movement. Later he came in contact with Gandhi and joined the Non-Cooperation Movement against the British.

Rani Gaidinliu : (i) Rani Gaidinliu was born in the present day state of Manipur. At the

age of 13, she joined in the Indian freedom struggle with Hasipau Jodonang. Jodonang was the political and spiritual leader of Naga.

(ii) Jodonang started a movement to drive away the British from Manipur. He was captured and hanged by the British.

(iii) After the death of her Guru, Gaidinliu assumed leadership of the movement. The British tried to suppress the movement. Rani went underground. But, very soon she was arrested in 1932. She was sent to jail.

(iv) Gaidinliu was released after India gained its independence. She was honoured with Tamrapatra and Padma Bhushan awards, Jawaharlal Nehru called her 'Rani' of the Nagas. She passed away on February 17, 1993.

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Q8 Choose any tribal group living in India today. Find out about their customs and way of life, and how their lives have changed in the last 50 years.

Answers. Gaddis: Gaddis are a pastoral tribe of Himachal Pradesh. They are shepherds by occupation. Gaddi women are very hardworking. They cut grasses and carry them to distant places and even climb mountains. to their home. Gaddi have their own traditional dance form. In this form, a couple dances for a while and is later replaced by another couple. The onlookers sing and clap to encourage the dancers. Due to the conversion of pasture lands into grazing lands and tax on pastures and animals, they suffered a lot during the British rule. Their conditions did not become good till independence. However, after the independence, Gaddis were restored with their pasture lands and grazing tax was abolished. The Government has begun various welfare schemes. They have also been provided reservation.

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