

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.

Answer.

- (a) The British described the tribal people as **wild and savage**.
- (b) The method of sowing seeds in jhum cultivation is known as **broadcasting**.
- (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.

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.

Answer.

- (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

Q3. What problems did shifting cultivators face under British rule?

Answer. The British always had a problem with cultivating farmers because they were always moving for pasture land. Shifting tenant farmers wanted to become farmers. The British thought that peasant tenants were easier to control and administer than to transfer cultivators. Hence, shifting cultivators faced problems when the company planned the land revenue system.

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

Answer. There was considerable change in the functions and powers of tribal chiefs under British rule. They lost much of his administrative power. They were forced to follow the laws made by the British. They had to pay tribute to the British. Therefore, under colonial rule they lost the rights they enjoyed among their people and were unable to fulfill their traditional principles.

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

Answer. The tribals were not happy with the Daiku, who were considered 'outsiders' by them. The tribals wanted to transfer farmers and not peasants. Diku wanted to settle in the lands of tribals who later wanted to sell their lands or rent their lands at very high interest rates. This made tribals unhappy. Also, tribal chiefs lost their administrative powers under British rule. Later the tribals were evicted from there Their land and they had to seek another livelihood.

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's vision of the Golden Age was to make his land free. He considered that age as the age of truth. According to Birsa, in the Golden Age, tribal chieftains would be able to govern among themselves and no one would be there to fulfill the conditions for them. There was no age like alcohol, witchcraft, sorcery, and uncleanness. He did not want any role like external participants Missionaries, Hindu Zamindars, moneylenders, traders and Europeans.

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