

Ch 4 Forest Society and Colonialism Class 9 Important Questions

Question 1.

What is deforestation ? Why is it considered harmful ?

Answer:

(a) The disappearance of forests is referred to as deforestation. Forests are cleared for industrial uses, cultivation, pastures and fuelwood.

(b) Clearing of forests is harmful as forests give us many things like paper, wood that makes our desks, tables, doors and windows, dyes that colour our clothes, spices in our food, gum, honey, coffee, tea and rubber. Forests are the home of animals and birds. They preserve our ecological diversity and life support systems. That is why deforestation considered harmful.

Question 2.

What are the new development in forestry ?

Answer:

Since the 1980s, governments across Asia and Africa have begun to see that scientific forestry and the policy of keeping forest communities away from forests has resulted in many conflicts. Conservation of forests rather than collecting timber has become a more important goal.

In many cases, across India, from Mizoram to Kerala, dense forests have survived only because villages protected them in sacred groves known as sarnas, devarakudu, kan, rai, etc.

Some villages have been patrolling their own forests, with each household taking it in turns, instead of leaving it to the forest guards. Local forest communities and environmentalists today are thinking of different forms of forest management.

Question 3.

Why did the people of Bastar rise in revolt against the British ?

Answer:

- They revolted because the British Government tried to reserve the forests which deprived the people of their rights to collect forest products and to practise shifting cultivation.
- Moreover, people were suffering from increased land rents and frequent demands for free labour and goods by colonial officials.
- People of Bastar cannot collect forest products.

- The terrible famines of 1839-1900 and 1907-1908 forced them to revolt against British authorities.

Question 4.

How did the spread of railways from the 1850s in India, create a new demand for timber ?

Answer:

The spread of railways from the 1850s created a new demand. Railways were essential for colonial trade and for the movement of imperial troops. To run locomotives, wood was needed as fuel, and to lay railway lines sleepers were essential to hold the tracks together. Each mile of railway track required between 1,760 and 2,000 sleepers.

From the 1860s, the railway network expanded rapidly. The length of the railway tracks increased tremendously. As railway tracks increased, the need of timber also increased. More and more trees were felled. Contracts were given to individuals to supply timber. These contractors cut down trees indiscriminately. Railway tracks were soon devoid of forests.

Question 5.

What was the Blandongdiensten system ?

Answer:

The Dutch wanted timber from Java for ship-building and railways. In 1882, 280,000 sleepers were exported from Java alone. However, all this required labour to cut the trees, transport the logs and prepare the sleepers. The Dutch first imposed rents on land being cultivated in the forest and then exempted some villages from these rents if they worked collectively to provide free labour and buffaloes for cutting and transporting timber. This was known as the blandongdiensten system.

Question 6.

Give any three reasons why cultivation expanded rapidly in the colonial period.

Answer:

Cultivation expanded rapidly in the colonial period because :

- The British encouraged the cultivation of commercial crops like jute, sugar, wheat and cotton.
- They tried to increase the yield of agricultural products.
- They tried to increase their revenue and enhance the income of the state.

Question 7.

Why did commercial forestry become important during the British rule ?

Answer:

The commercial forestry become important during the British rule because :

- By the early nineteenth century, oak forests in England were disappearing. This created a problem of timber supply for the Royal Navy.

- English ships could not be built without a regular supply of strong and durable timber neither could imperial power be protected and maintained without ships.
- For above both factors, before 1850, the commercial forestry was considered important in India. By the 1820s, search parties were sent to explore the forest resources of India. These parties gave a green signal for commercial forestry in India. Within a decade, trees were being felled on a massive scale and large quantities of timber were being exported from India.
- The spread of railway from the 1850s created a new demand for wood. In India the colonial government felt that railways were essential for effective colonial internal administration, colonial trade and for the quick movement of imperial troops. To run locomotives, wood was needed as fuel and to lay railway lines, sleepers were also essential to hold the track together.

Question 8.

How are forests useful for the villagers ?

Answer:

The forests useful for the villagers as :

- In forest areas, people use forest products—roots, leaves, fruits and timbers—for many things. Fruits and roots are nutritious and good for health, especially during the monsoons before the harvest has come in.
- Herbs are used for medicine, wood for agricultural implements like yokes and ploughs, bamboo makes excellent fences and is also used to make baskets and umbrellas.
- A dried scooped-out gourd can be used as a portable water bottle. Almost everything is available in the forest-leaves can be stitched together to make disposable plates and cups, the siadi (*Bauhinia uablii*) creeper can be used to make ropes, and the thorny bark of the semur (silk-cotton) tree is used to grate vegetables.
- Oil for cooking and lighting lamps can be taken by pressing the fruit of the mahua tree.

Question 9.

Where is Bastar located ? How did the people by Bastan react against the British forest policies ?

Answer:

Bastar is situated in the southern part of Chhattisgarh and borders Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. The river Indrawati flows from east to west across Bastar. The central part of Bastar is a plateau. To the north of this plateau is the Chhattisgarh plain and to its south is the Godavari plain.

The people of Bastar were very worried when the colonial government proposed to reserve two-thirds of the forest in 1905, and stop shifting cultivation, hunting and collection of forest produce.

- People began to gather and discuss these issues in their village councils, in bazaars and at festivals or wherever the headmen and priests of several villages were assembled.
- In 1910, mango boughs, a lump of earth, chillies and arrows, began circulating between villages. These were messages inviting villagers to rebel against the British.
- Every village contributed something to the rebellion expenses. Bazaars were looted, the houses of officials and traders, schools and police stations were burnt and robbed, and grain redistributed.
- Most of those who were attacked were in some way associated with the colonial state and its oppressive laws.

Question 10

Mention the causes of deforestation in India under the colonial rule.

Answer:

During the colonial rule deforestation was more systematic and extensive. In the colonial period, cultivation expanded rapidly for various reasons.

- The British encouraged the production of commercial crops like jute, sugar, wheat and cotton. The demand for these crops increased in the 19th century and forests were cleared to meet the foodgrains and raw materials needed for industrial growth in Europe where foodgrains were needed to feed the growing urban population and raw materials were required for industrial production.
- The spread of railways from 1850 created a new demand. To run locomotives, wood was needed as fuel and to lay railway lines sleepers were necessary to hold the tracks together. From the 1860s, the railway network expanded rapidly. By 1890, about 25,500 km of track had been laid.
- The government gave out contracts to individuals and the contractors began cutting the trees rapidly. Forests around the tracks disappeared.
- Large areas of natural forests were cleared for tea, coffee and rubber plantations to meet Europe's growing need for these commodities.