

Std. 8 – History Chapter 4 - Tribals, Dikus and the Vision of a Golden Age

WORK SHEET

Note for the teacher: This worksheet contains questions and answers given in the text and a few extra revision questions with answers which may be discussed with the students.

Question 1) Fill in the blanks:

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

Question 2) 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) False, (b) True, (c) True, (d) False

Question 3) What problems did shifting cultivators face under British rule?

Suggested answer:-

British rule affected the tribal lives in the many ways:

- Forests were the habitat and the source of food for the tribals. Tribal communities suffered when the British declared forests as state property.
- Forests were declared as reserved and protected.
- Tribals were not allowed to practice shifting cultivation and to collect fruits, food and woods.
- The tribal chiefs lost many of their administrative powers and had to follow the rules which were framed by the British. They also had to pay taxes to the British.
- The tribals had to travel to faraway places in search of work and suffer many hardships.
- They were paid extremely low wages and were also prevented from returning to their homes.

Question 4) How did the powers of tribal chiefs change under colonial rule?**Suggested answer:-**

- The tribal chiefs enjoyed a lot of power before the arrival of the British.
- With the advent of the British they were allowed to keep their lands or rent the land, but were forced to follow the laws made by the British.
- They also had to pay tribute to them.
- They were expected to discipline the tribal groups on behalf of the British.
- They lost their authority and were unable to fulfill their traditional functions.

Question 5) What accounts for the anger of the tribals against the dikus?**Suggested answer:-**

Through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, tribal groups in different parts of the country rebelled against the changes in laws, the restrictions on their

practices, the new taxes they had to pay, and the exploitation by traders and moneylenders.

They wanted to drive out these outsiders whom they called Dikus—missionaries, moneylenders, Hindu landlords, and the government because they saw them as the cause of their misery. Their anger against the Dikus was on account of:

- (i) The land policies of the British which were destroying their traditional land system.
- (ii) Hindu landlords were taking over their land.
- (iii) The moneylenders made large sums of money by putting the tribals in debt traps.
- (iv) The missionaries were criticising their traditional culture.

SOURCE BASED ANALYSIS

Question1: Read the following extracts taken from the NCERT textbook and answer the questions that follow:

A)

“In this land of the English how hard it is to live”

In the 1930s Verrier Elwin visited the land of the Baigas—a tribal group in central India. He wanted to know about them—their customs and practices, their art and folklore. He recorded many songs that lamented the hard time the Baigas were having under British rule.

In this land of the English how hard it is to live

How hard it is to live

In the village sits the landlord

In the gate sits the Kotwar

In the garden sits the Patwari

In the field sits the government

In this land of the English how hard it is to live

To pay cattle tax we have to sell cow

To pay forest tax we have to sell buffalo

To pay land tax we have to sell bullock

How are we to get our food?

In this land of the English.

(Quoted in Verrier Elwin and Shamrao Hiwale, Songs of the Maikal, p. 316)

Questions:-

(i) Who were the Baigas?

(ii) Why did Verrier Elwin visit their land?

(iii) What were the songs about?

(iv) What was a unique trait of the Baigas?

Answers:

(i) The Baigas were a tribal group living in central India.

(ii) Verrier Elwin visited their land because he was very interested in knowing about them. He wanted to know their customs and practices, their art and folklore.

(iii) The songs that he recorded tell us about the hard time the Baigas were having under British rule.

(iv) The Baigas considered themselves as people of the forest, who only lived on the produce of the forest. It was below the dignity of a Baiga to work for others or become a labourer.

B) 'Blood trickles from my shoulders'

The songs the Mundas sang bemoaned their misery.

Alas! Under [the drudgery of] forced labour

Blood trickles from my shoulders

Day and night the emissary from the zamindars,

Annoys and irritates me,

day and night I groan

Alas! This is my condition

I do not have a home,

where shall I get happiness

Alas!

(K.S. Singh, Birsa Munda and His Movement, p.12.)

Questions:-

(i) Who were the Mundas?

(ii) Who was the spiritual leader of the Mundas?

(iii) Why does the song bemoan the misery of the Mundas?

(iv) What was the fate of Birsa Munda's Spiritual Movement?

Answers:

(i) The Mundas were a tribal group who lived in Chottanagpur.

(ii) Birsa Munda was the spiritual leader of the Mundas.

(iii) The song bemoans the misery of the Mundas because they recall the days of glory enjoyed by their ancestors, when they were the landlords of the original settlements of land who could live a good life, construct embankments, and tap natural springs, plant trees and orchards, practice cultivation to earn their living. Now they were oppressed by the laws laid down by the British which stopped the tribal people from living inside forests. They were forced to move to other areas in search of work and provide cheap labor for the Zamindars and British.

(iv) After Birsa was released in 1897, he began to tour the villages to gather support. He urged his supporters to destroy Dikus and the Europeans and establish a kingdom under his leadership. In 1900, he died of cholera and the movement faded out. But it proved important in the long run.

His movement brought about two things -

- i. It made the government introduce laws so that the land of the tribes could not be taken easily and
- ii. It proved that tribal people could express their anger against colonial rule and become symbols of struggle.