

Short Answer Questions

Q.1. How could English ships be built without a regular supply of strong and durable timber?

Ans. (i) Search parties of Great Britain were sent to explore the forest regions of India.

(ii) Within a decade, trees were being felled on a massive scale and vast quantities of timber were being exported from India.

Q.2. What do you mean by shifting Swidden Agriculture?

Ans. (i) It is a traditional agricultural practice in many parts of Asia, Africa and South America.

(ii) A piece of land is cleared and cultivation is practiced. When it lost fertility, they used to shift to the other forest covered area.

Q.3. What restrictions were imposed by the Dutch in Java forest laws?

Ans. (i) The Java people were not allowed to graze their cattle

(ii) The Java people could not transport wood without permit

(iii) The Java people were not allowed to travel on forest roads with horse carts or cattle.

Q.4. What are the various uses of forests in our day-to-day lives?

Ans. (i) Paper is used for making books, wood is used for desks and tables, doors and windows, dyes are used for colouring our clothes, we get spices to add to our food, the cellophane wrapper of toffees, tendu leaf in bidis, gum, honey and coffee, tea and rubber.

(ii) Oil in chocolates comes from sal seeds, the tannin used to convert skins and hides into leather or the herbs used for medical purposes are all derived from forests.

(iii) Forests also provide bamboo, wood for fuel, grass charcoal, packaging, fruits, flowers, animals, birds, etc.

Q.5. What were the main causes of deforestation in India during the British rule?

Ans. The main causes of deforestation were the following:

(i) The British encouraged the production of commercial crops like jute, sugar, wheat and cotton. The production of foodgrains was needed to feed the growing urban population and raw material was required for British industries in Britain.

(ii) The British thought that forests were unproductive. They were of the view that space covered with forests could be used for cultivation which could fetch them revenue and enhance the income of the state also.

Q.6. How were forests cleared to expand the railway network in India in the early 19th century?

Ans. (i) The spread of the railways from the 1850s created a new demand for timber.

(ii) Railway was needed for the spread of trade in India. To run locomotives, wood was needed as fuel and to lay railway lines, sleepers were required to hold the tracks together.

(iii) As the railway tracks spread, a large number of trees were felled. The government gave contracts to individuals to supply timber.

These contractors began cutting trees indiscriminately.

Q.7. State any three main characteristics of Tropical deciduous forests.

Ans. Main characteristics of Tropical deciduous forests:

(i) These are the most widespread forests in India.

(ii) They are also called the monsoon forests and are spread over the region.

(iii) They receive rainfall between 70 cm and 200 cm.

(iv) Trees shed their leaves for about six to eight weeks in dry summer.

Q.8. What circumstances led to the foundation of 'scientific forestry' by the German expert Dietrich Brandis?

Ans. • Brandis felt that a proper system had to be adopted to manage forests and that people had to be trained in the science of conservation.

- He needed legal sanction and rules on the use of forests.

- He felt that the felling of trees and grazing had to be restricted so that forests could be preserved for timber production.

- He set up the Indian Forest Service in 1864 and helped to formulate the Indian Forest Act of 1865.

- The Imperial Forest Research Institute was set up at Dehradun in 1906.
- The system they taught here was called 'scientific forestry'.

Q.9. What do you know about Scientific Forestry?

Ans. (i) In scientific forestry, natural forests which had different types of trees were cut down. In their place, one type of trees were planted in straight rows which is called 'plantation'.

(ii) Forest officials surveyed the forest, estimated the area and made working plans for the forest management.

(iii) They scientifically planned on how much of the plantation areas to cut every year. The areas cut were then to be replanted, so that they were ready to be cut again in some years.

Q.10. How were forests classified on the basis of the Forest Act, 1878?

Ans. Classification of forests on the basis of Act of 1878:

(i) Reserved forests: The best forests were called Reserved forests. Villagers could not take anything from these forests.

(ii) Protected forests: They were also protected by the villagers but they could collect wood from the Protected forests.

(iii) Village forests: They were located near the villages and could be exploited by the villagers but not for commercial purposes.

Q.11. How did hunting become a big sport for the Indian people?

Ans. (i) In India, hunting of tigers and other animals had been part of the culture of the court and nobility from centuries.

(ii) Many Mughal paintings show princes and emperors enjoying their hunt.

(iii) Under colonial rule, the scale of hunting increased to such an extent that various species became almost extinct.

Q.12. In what ways did the British regulate forest trade?

Ans. (i) The British government gave many large European trading firms the sole right to trade in the forest products of particular areas.

(ii) Grazing and hunting by the local people were restricted.

(iii) In this process, many pastoralists and nomadic communities lost their livelihoods. Some of them were forced to work in factories, mines and plantations in order to restrict them from entering into forest trade.

Q.13. How did Indian labour suffer at the British hands in the plantations?

Ans. (i) In Assam, both men and women from forest communities like Santhals and Gonds were recruited to work on tea plantations.

(ii) Their wages were low and conditions of work were very bad, rough and tough.

(iii) They could not return easily to their home villages, as they were kept as bonded labourers who were tied to their landlords.

Q.14. What were the main causes of the revolt of Bastar?

Ans. • In 1905, the British put a stop on shifting cultivation, hunting and collection of forest produce, which affected the people of Bastar.

- Some of the villagers were allowed to stay in the Reserved forests on the condition that they would cut and transport trees and protect the forests from fire for forest department for free.
- People of other villages were displaced without any notice or compensation.
- Villagers had been suffering from increased land rents and demand for free labour by British officials.
- The problems were added by the terrible famines of 1899-1900 and 1907-08.
- These conditions thus led to a revolt by the people of Bastar.

Q.15. How did the British suppress the revolt of Bastar?

Ans. • The British sent troops to suppress the rebellion.

- The adivasi leaders tried to negotiate but the British surrounded their camps and fired on them.
- Then they marched through the villages flogging and punishing those who had taken part in the rebellion.
- Most villages were deserted as people fled into the jungle out of fear.
- The British could regain control over Bastar people in three months.

Q.16. Give a brief description about the woodcutter community of Java—the Kalangs.

Ans. • The Kalangs of Java were skilled forest cutters and they practised shifting cultivation.

- They were so valuable that when the kingdom of Java split, the Kalang families were equally divided between two kingdoms.
- Without them, it was difficult to harvest teak and build kings' palaces.
- The Dutch tried to make the Kalangs work under them.
- In 1770, the Kalangs resisted by attacking a Dutch fort but they were suppressed.

Q.17. How were forest laws enacted in Java?

Ans. (i) The Dutch enacted forest laws in Java to restrict villagers' access to forests.

(ii) Now wood cutting was done only for specific purposes like making boats, constructing houses under close supervision, etc.

(iii) Villagers were punished for grazing cattle, transporting wood without a permit or travelling through forests with horse carts or cattle.

Q.18. What was the Blandongdiensten system?

Ans. • The Dutch first imposed rents on land being cultivated in the forest and then exempted some villages from paying these rents, if they provided free labour and buffaloes for cutting and transporting timber.

- This system was known as Blandongdiensten system.
- Later, instead of rent exemption forest villagers were given small wages, but their right to cultivate forest land was restricted.

Q.19. What do you know about Samin's challenge?

Ans. (i) Surontiko Samin of a teak forest village began questioning state ownership of forests.

(ii) He argued that the state had not created the wind, water, earth and wood, so it could not own it.

(iii) Soon, he organised a widespread movement with the support of his sons-in-law and other families in his village.

Some Saminists protested by lying down on their land when the Dutch came to survey it, while others refused to pay taxes or fines or perform labour.

Q.20. What was the effect of laying down of railway lines on forests?

Ans. (i) As early as the 1850s, in the Madras Presidency alone, 35,000 trees were being cut annually for sleepers.

(ii) The government gave out contracts to individuals to supply the required quantities.

(iii) These contractors began cutting trees indiscriminately. Forests around the railway tracks started disappearing fast.

Q.21. Why did the British appoint the first Inspector General of Forests in India?

Ans. • British needed forests in order to build ships and railways.

- They were worried that the use of forests by local people and the reckless felling of trees by traders would destroy forests.

- So, they decided to invite a German expert, Dietrich Brandis, for advice and made him the first Inspector General of Forests in India.

Q.22. How forest dwellers' lives changed after new forest laws were imposed?

Ans. • The new forest laws changed the lives of forest dwellers in yet another way.

- Before the forest laws, many people who lived in or near forests had survived by hunting deer, partridges and a variety of small animals.

- This customary practice was prohibited by the forest laws. Those who were caught hunting were now punished for poaching.

Q.23. How were people benefitted with the trade in forest products?

Ans. (i) Many communities left their traditional occupations and started trading in forest products.

(ii) This happened not only in India but across the world. For example, with the growing demand for rubber in the mid-19th century, the Mundurucu people of Brazilian Amazon who lived in villages on high ground, began to collect latex from wild rubber trees for supplying to traders.

(iii) Gradually, they descended to live in trading ports and became completely dependent on traders.

Q.24. Where is Bastar located?

Ans. (i) Bastar is located in the southernmost part of Chhattisgarh and borders Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Maharashtra.

(ii) The central part of Bastar is on a plateau.

(iii) To the north of this plateau is the Chhattisgarh plain and to its south is the Godavari plain.

The river Indrawati winds across Bastar east to west.

Q.25. Explain some of the common customs and beliefs of the Bastar people.

Ans. Common customs and beliefs of the Bastar people

(i) Believed that land is given by mother earth.

(ii) Respect shown to the spirits of river, forest and mountain.

(iii) All natural resources to be looked after

(iv) Anyone seen cutting forests has to pay a fee.