

HOTS (Higher Order Thinking Skills)

Q.1. When and why did the forests around the railway tracks start disappearing very fast? Explain.

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

(ii) Railway was needed for the spread of trade in India.

(iii) To run locomotives, wood was needed as fuel and to lay railway lines, sleepers were required to hold the tracks together.

(iv) As the railway tracks spread, a large number of trees were felled.

(v) The Government gave contracts to individuals to supply timber.

(vi) These contractors began cutting trees indiscriminately.

Q.2. What is Swidden Agriculture? Where is it practised? Describe its main features.

Ans.

- One of the major impacts of European colonialism was on the practice of shifting cultivation or 'Swidden Agriculture'.
- This is a traditional agricultural practice in many parts of Asia, Africa and South America.
- It has many local names such as Lading in Southeast Asia, Milpa in Central America and Chena in Sri Lanka, etc.
- In India, Dhya, Penda, Bewar, Jhum, etc. are some of the local terms for Swidden agriculture.
- In shifting cultivation, parts of forests are cut and burnt in rotation.
- Seeds are sown in the ashes after the first monsoon rains, and the crop is harvested by October–November.
- Such plots are cultivated for a couple of years and then left fallow for 12 to 18 years for the forests to grow back.