

ATOMIC ENERGY EDUCATION SOCIETY

CLASS: VIII STUDY MATERIAL SUBJECT: HISTORY

LESSON 4 – TRIBALS, DIKUS AND THE VISION OF A GOLDEN AGE (MODULE 1/2)

IMPORTANT POINTS

Colonial rule had affected each and every class of the people, be it rulers, nobles, common people, peasants and artisans or tribals.

The tribal life was disrupted in many ways by the colonial rule. There was a significant change experienced by the tribal people after they came into contact with the colonial rule and the outsiders whom they described as **dikus**.

The customs and rituals of tribal societies differ from those laid down by the Brahmins.

Unlike the caste societies, the societies of tribal did not have the sharp social divisions.

Those who belong to the same tribe shared common ties of kinship

By the 19th century, tribal people in different parts of India were involved in a variety of activities

Some tribal people engaged in or Jhum /shifting cultivation. In this type of cultivation, small patches of land were made cleared of trees. The cultivators burnt the vegetation and spread the ash from the firing, which contained potash to fertilise the soil. They used equipment like axe and hoe for preparing the soil for cultivation.

Shifting cultivators were found in the hilly and forested tracts of North east and Central India.

ILLUSTRATION IN SLIDE 5

Some tribal groups earned their livelihood by hunting animals and gathering forest produce. The Khonds were such community living in the forest of Orissa. They ate fruits and roots collected from the forest and cooked food with the oil they extracted from the seeds of Sal and Mahua. They used many forest shrubs and herbs for medicinal purpose. Kusum and Palash were supplied to the weavers and leather workers to add colour to the clothes and leather.

ILLUSTRATION IN SLIDE 8 &9

At times they exchanged goods – getting what they needed in return for their forest produce. Some of them were engaged in some odd jobs in villages and some of them wander around in search of work. However, Baigas remained in the forest they did not like to go anywhere

Several tribal groups engaged in herding and rearing animals. Example is given in the following table.:

TRIBAL GROUP	STATE	HERDING/REARING
Van Gujjars	Punjab	Cattle herding
Lambadis	Andhrapradesh	Cattle herding
Gaddis	Kulu	Shepherds
Bakarwals	Kashmir	Reared Goats

Many tribal groups preferred to settle down instead of moving from one place to another. They began to use plough and gradually got rights over the land they lived on.

The British officials found the settled tribal groups like Gonds and Santhals more civilized than hunter gatherers or shifting cultivators.

ILLUSTRATION IN SLIDE 13

The British rule ,however, changed the life of the tribal people..

The tribal chiefs were considered important people because it is they who controlled their territories. Under the British rule they lost their administrative power and were forced to follow law made by British officials in India.

The British made effort to settle Jhum cultivators but they could not be very successful due to water scarcity and dryness of soil.

The Jhum cultivators who took to plough cultivation often suffered, because their fields did not produce good yields..

At last the British had to allow them the right to carry on shifting cultivation.

 FOR BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE MODULE 1/2 FEW OF THE QUESTIONS ARE ANSWERED HERE: (slide 20)

1What is the other name of Shifting cultivation? Jhum Cultivation

2What was the main activity of Khonds of Orissa? Hunting and collecting forest produce

3What do you mean by fallow land? A field left uncultivated for a while in order to restore soil fertility.

Refer Text Book page no 49 and 50

1. Fill in the blanks:

- (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.

2. State whether true or false:

- (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**

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

Answer.

The life of shifting cultivators was directly connected to the forest.

Their life was badly affected by the Forest laws introduced by the Britishers.

The British declared forests as State property. So in the forests shifting cultivators were not allowed to move freely and practice Jhum cultivation.

As a result, many shifting cultivators had to move to other areas in search of work.

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

Answer.

Under British rule, the functions and powers of the tribal chiefs changed considerably.

They were allowed to keep their land titles over a cluster of villages and rent out lands, but they lost much of their administrative power and were forced to follow laws made by the British officials in India.

They also had to pay tribute to the British, and discipline the tribal groups on behalf of the British.

They lost the authority that they had earlier enjoyed among their people and were unable to fulfill their traditional functions.

Contnd.in Module 2/2