



CLASS - VIII SOCIAL SCIENCE NOTES AUGUST

HISTORY: 4. Tribals, Dikus and the Vision of a Golden Age

I. Answer the following Questions:

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

The life of shifting cultivators was directly connected to the forest. So, when the British brought changes in forest laws, their life was badly affected. The British extended their control over all forests and declared that forests were state property. Some forests were classified as Reserved Forests for they produced timber which the British wanted. In these forests, people were not allowed to move freely and practice jhum cultivations. As a result, many jhum cultivators had to move to other areas in search of work.

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

Change in the Powers of the Tribal Chiefs under Colonial Rule

- Before the arrival of the British in India, tribal chiefs were important people.
- They had economic power.
- They had the right to administer and control their territories.
- In some areas, they had their own policy.
- They decided on the local rules of land and forest management.

The British changed their functions and powers considerably.

- They were allowed to keep their land titles over a cluster of villages and rent outlands.
- They were divested of their administrative power.
- They were forced to follow laws made by the British 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 they had earlier enjoyed amongst their people.
- Now they were unable to fulfill their traditional functions.

3. What accounts for the anger of the tribals against the dikus?

The tribals wanted to drive out the dikus—missionaries, moneylenders, Hindu landlords, and the government because they saw them as the cause of their misery. The following facts account for their anger against the dikus:

1. The land policies of the British were destroying their traditional land system.
2. Hindu landlords and moneylenders were taking over their land.
3. Missionaries were criticising their traditional culture.

4. What was Birsa's vision of a golden age? Why do you think such a vision appealed to the people of the region?

Birsa was deeply influenced by many of the ideas he came in touch within his growing-up years. The movement that he led aimed at reforming tribal society. He urged the Munda to

give up drinking liquor, clean their village, and stop believing in witchcraft and sorcery. He often remembered the golden past of the Mundas, when they lived a good life, constructed embankments, tapped natural springs, planted trees and orchards, practiced cultivation to earn their living. They did not kill their brethren and relatives. They lived honestly. Birsa wanted to restore this glorious past. Such a vision appealed to the people of the region because they were very much eager to lead a free life. They had got fed up with the colonial forest laws and the restrictions that were imposed on them.

CIVICS: 3. Parliament and the Making of Laws

I. Answer the following Questions:

1. Why do you think our national movement supported the idea that all adults have a right to vote?

Ans. Our national movement supported the idea that all adults have a right to vote because:

- a. The nationalist had started openly criticizing the British government and make demands.
- b. As far back as 1885, the Indian National Congress demanded that there be elected members in the legislation with right to discuss the budget and ask questions.
- c. The Government of India Act 1909 allowed for some elected representation. However, they did not allow for all adults to vote nor could people participate in the decision making.
- d. With the coming of independence, it was felt that the government had to be sensitive to people's need and demands. This led the nationalist movement to support the idea that all adults have the right to vote.

2. How is a national government selected?

Answer: After the Lok Sabha elections, a list is prepared showing how many MPs belong to each political party. For a political party to form the government, they must have a majority of elected MPs. Since there are 543 elected (plus 2 Anglo-Indian nominated) members in Lok Sabha, to have a majority a party should have at least half the number i.e. 272 members or more.

3. How does the Parliament control the executive?

Answer: The Parliament, while in session, begins with a question hour. The question hour is an important mechanism through which MPs can elicit information about the working of the government. This is a very important way through which the Parliament controls the executive. By asking questions the government is alerted to its shortcomings, and also comes to know the opinion of the people through their representatives in the Parliament, i.e. the MPs.

4. What is the role of opposition in democracy?

Answer: The Opposition parties play a critical role in the healthy functioning of a democracy. They highlight drawbacks in various policies and programmes of the government and mobilise popular support for their own policies.