

# CHAPTER-IV

## FOREST SOCIETY AND COLONIALISM

### 2 MARK QUESTIONS

**1.Who was Dietrich Brandis ?**

**ANSWER:**

Dietrich Brandis was a German forest expert, whom the colonial government invited for advice and made him the first Inspector General of forests in India

**2.**

**Villagers were punished for**

**ANSWER:**

Grazing cattle in young stands and cutting wood without a permit or travelling on forest roads with horse carts or cattle.

**3.Why are Mahua trees precious ?**

**ANSWER:**

Mahua trees are precious because they are an essential part of village livelihood.

**4.What was the effect of Forest Act on the people living nearby ?**

**ANSWER:**

People were forced to steal wood from the forests, and if they were caught, they were at the mercy of the forest guards who would take bribes from them.

**5.What steps were taken under the new scheme of scientific forestry ?**

**ANSWER:**

- Natural forests which had different types of trees, were cut down.
- In their place, one type of trees were planted.

## **4 MARK QUESTIONS**

**1. What are the similarities between colonial management of the forests in Bastar and Java?**

**ANSWER:**

The colonial management of forests in Bastar district of India and Java of Indonesia can be noticed plainly. The colonial government took away the rights of the forest dwellers and forced them to choose a different occupation. The forest dwellers of both areas had to migrate and take on work in plantations under British landowners.

**2. Why are forests affected by wars?**

**ANSWER:**

During wars, forests become resources to supply wood. The bombings and fire destroy forest cover and kill many plants and animals. Forests are cut down to build new military bases, air stations. As the world had observed, during World War II, the Dutch burned down sawmills and teak logs in the jungle area in Java to keep those resources out of the Japanese army's hands. The destroyed forest became exposed for agriculture and was never returned.

**3.What is deforestation ? Why is it considered harmful ?**

**ANSWER:**

- (a) The disappearance of forests is referred to as deforestation. Forests are cleared for industrial uses, cultivation, pastures and fuelwood.
- (b) Clearing of forests is harmful as forests give us many things like paper, wood that makes our desks, tables, doors and windows, dyes that colour our clothes, spices in our food, gum, honey, coffee, tea and rubber. Forests are the home of animals and birds. They preserve our ecological

diversity and life support systems. That is why deforestation considered harmful.

#### **4. Why did the people of Bastar rise in revolt against the British ?**

##### **ANSWER:**

They revolted because the British Government tried to reserve the forests which deprived the people of their rights to collect forest products and to practise shifting cultivation.

Moreover, people were suffering from increased land rents and frequent demands for free labour and goods by colonial officials.

People of Bastar cannot collect forest products.

The terrible famines of 1839-1900 and 1907-1908 forced them to revolt against British authorities.

#### **5. How did the spread of railways from the 1850s in India, create a new demand for timber ?**

##### **ANSWER:**

The spread of railways from the 1850s created a new demand. Railways were essential for colonial trade and for the movement of imperial troops. To run locomotives, wood was needed as fuel, and to lay railway lines sleepers were essential to hold the tracks together. Each mile of railway track required between 1,760 and 2,000 sleepers.

## 7 MARK QUESTIONS

**1. Discuss how the changes in forest management in the colonial period affected the following groups of people:**

**i. Shifting Cultivators**

**ANSWER:**

During the colonial period, the new forest laws barred shifting cultivation. Many indigenous tribes who were shifting cultivators who depended upon this method of agriculture for centuries faced the loss of their livelihood. They did not have their land and banning this agricultural method forced them to migrate and take up other occupations. Many shifting cultivators had to take up working in the tea plantations.

**ii. Nomadic and Pastoralist Communities**

**Ans:** Nomadic and pastoralist communities depend on forest resources for their livelihood. During the colonial period, the new forest laws took away their rights to graze animals in the forest land. Hunting, gathering forest products such as grass, leaves, bamboo, spices, honey, etc. without permission became criminal offenses. Thus, those nomadic communities who depended on forests lost their livelihood. They were declared as criminal tribes. Many Nomadic and pastoralist communities had to shift towards working in factories, plantations, logging mills under government management.

**iii. Firms Trading in Timber/Forest Produce**

**Ans:** During the colonial period, the new forest laws brought forests under the hold of the British government as resources. Companies dealing with timber production and other forest produce could take lease of the forest from the government. The market was booming for forest products especially timber due to its use in infrastructure, furniture making, ship making, etc. Thus, firms engaged in the timber trade and forest products made good profits.

**iv. Plantation Owners**

**Ans:** During the colonial period, the plantation owners could get forest land at cheaper rates. Members of indigenous forest communities were recruited for minimal wages as plantation laborers. Due to new policies, the plantation laborers could not leave to go back to their villages. Thus,

Plantation owners gained not only ownership of the forest lands but also cheap labor to maintain the business. Thus, the plantation business became profitable in colonial India.

**v. Kings/British Officials Engaged in Shikar**

**Ans:** Though hunting was made illegal to the indigenous forest tribes and common mass in colonial India, the same became a sport for Kings, zamindars, and British officials. British viewed killing large animals such as tigers, wolves, leopards as a process to make India a civilized nation. Between 1875–1925 approximately 80,000 tigers, 150,000 leopards and 200,000 wolves were killed alone in India. Thus, the population of wild species certainly declined.

**2. Between 1880 and 1920, forest cover in the Indian subcontinent declined by 9.7 million hectares, from 108.6 million hectares to 98.9 million hectares. Discuss the role of the following factors in this decline:**

**i. Railways**

**ANSWER:**

The British government started the construction of the railways in India after establishing the colonial rule. To supply a large number of wooden sleepers for the railway track, a large number of sal trees were cut. The government gave the contractors full access to get timbers to form the forest. The forests around the railway tracks soon disappeared.

**ii. Shipbuilding**

**Ans:** The British depended upon their navy for the expansion and maintenance of large colonial areas over the world. The main trade routes during 1880–1920 were shipping routes. Thus, shipbuilding was a booming industry in Britain. The colonial government used Indian forest as the resource for shipbuilding raw materials such as Oak timbers. Thus, this industry contributed to the disappearance of forests in India.

**iii. Agricultural expansion**

**Ans:** The growing population of Europe needed a large supply of food grains. The British government used India as a supplier of grains. To meet the demand, new forest areas were cleared to make way for agricultural land.

**iv. Commercial farming**

**Ans:** Before the colonial period, farmers mainly cultivated food grains. To supply raw materials for the textile industry of Britain, the colonial government forced the farmers to grow cash crops like cotton and indigo. Thus, Indian agriculture became commercialized. To increase the cash crop production, new forest lands were cleared to turn them into agricultural land.

**v. Tea/coffee plantations**

**Ans:** British brought tea and coffee cultivation in India as demand for them increased in Britain. The climate of southern India was suited for coffee cultivation and thus in many places of Karnataka coffee plantations were

established. Similarly, the northeastern hills and Darjeeling became the hubs for tea cultivation. British individuals began to buy forest lands at a cheap rate and forest dwellers were forced into plantation work for minimal wages. The forest lands were cleared and plantations were built.

#### **vi. Adivasis and other peasant users**

**Ans:** The forest dweller Adivasis depended on the forest for their livelihood. They had always protected the forest lands. But forest law issued by the colonial government left them without any rights over forest lands. So, they have less impact on deforestation during 1880–1920. But at the same time, other peasants took the opportunity to increase agricultural land areas.

### **3.What are the new development in forestry ?**

#### **ANSWER:**

Since the 1980s, governments across Asia and Africa have begun to see that scientific forestry and the policy of keeping forest communities away from forests has resulted in many conflicts. Conservation of forests rather than collecting timber has become a more important goal.

In many cases, across India, from Mizoram to Kerala, dense forests have survived only because villages protected them in sacred groves known as sarnas, devarakudu, kan, rai, etc.

Some villages have been patrolling their own forests, with each household taking it in turns, instead of leaving it to the forest guards. Local forest communities and environmentalists today are thinking of different forms of forest management.



**4. When was the Forest Act passed in India ? Why did it cause hardship for the villages across the country ?**

**ANSWER:**

The Forest Act was enacted in 1865 and was amended twice in 1878 and 1927.

It divided the forests into three categories : reserved, protected and village forests. The best forests were known as the reserved forests. Villagers were not allowed to take anything from these forests, even for their own use.

This caused great hardship for the villagers. All their daily practices such as cutting wood for their houses, grazing their cattle, collecting fruits and roots, hunting and fishing became illegal.

People were now forced to steal wood from the forests. If they were caught by the forest guards, they were punished. Women could not collect fuelwood from the forests, forest guards and constables harassed them.

**5.The people of Bastar speak different languages but share common customs and beliefs” Discuss.****ANSWER:**

The people of Bastar believe that each village was given its land by the Earth, and in return, they look after the earth by making some offerings at each agricultural festival. In addition to the Earth, they show respect to the spirits of the river, the forest and the mountain. Since each village knows where its boundaries lie, the local people look after all the natural resources within that boundary. If people from a village want to take some wood from the forests of another village, they pay a small fee called devsari, dand or man in exchange.

- Some villages also protect their forests by engaging watchmen and each household contributes some grain to pay them. Every year there is one big hunt where the headmen of villages in a pargana (cluster of villages) meet and discuss issues of concern, including forests.

**6. Who were the Kalangs ? Why did they attack the Dutch forts at Joana ?**

**ANSWER:**

The Kalangs were a community of Java. They were skilled forests cutters and shifting cultivators. They were so valuable that teak could not be harvested without them, nor could kings build their palaces.

When the Mataram Kingdom of Java split, the families of the Kalang community were divided equally between the two kingdoms. When the Dutch colonised Java they forced the Kalangs to work under them. The Kalangs resisted by attacking the Dutch fort at Joana, but the uprising was suppressed.

**7. What were the consequences of the forest laws which the Dutch enacted in Java ?**

**ANSWER:**

In the 19th century, when it became important to central territory and not just people, the Dutch enacted forest law in Java. These laws restricted villagers' access to forests. After these acts were imposed, wood could only be cut for specified purposes such as making river boats or constructing houses and that too only from specific forests and under close supervision. Those villagers who grazed cattle in young stands, transported wood without permit or travelled on forest lands with horse carts or cattle were punished.

## **8.How are forests useful for the villagers ?**

### **ANSWER:**

The forests useful for the villagers as :

- In forest areas, people use forest products—roots, leaves, fruits and timbers—for many things. Fruits and roots are nutritious and good for health, especially during the monsoons before the harvest has come in.
- Herbs are used for medicine, wood for agricultural implements like yokes and ploughs, bamboo makes excellent fences and is also used to make baskets and umbrellas.
- A dried scooped-out gourd can be used as a portable water bottle. Almost everything is available in the forest-leaves can be stitched together to make disposable plates and cups, the siadi (*Bauhinia uablii*) creeper can be used to make ropes, and the thorny bark of the semur (silk-cotton) tree is used to grate vegetables.
- Oil for cooking and lighting lamps can be taken by pressing the fruit of the mahua tree.

## MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

**1.Tendu leaves are used in making**

- (a) bidis
- (b) plates
- (c) baskets
- (d) umbrellas

**Answer: (a) bidis**

**2.The railway network expanded rapidly in India from the**

- (a) 1820s
- (b) 1830s
- (c) 1850s
- (d) 1860s

**Answer: (d) 1860s**

**3.The Imperial Forest Research Institute was set up at**

- (a) Allahabad
- (b) Darjeeling
- (c) Dehradun
- (d) Shimla

**Answer: (c) Dehradun**

**4. Baigas are a forest community of**

- (a) Central India
- (b) North India
- (c) South India
- (d) North-east India

**Answer: (a) Central India**

**5. The colonial power in Indonesia were the**

- (a) English
- (b) Dutch
- (c) French
- (d) Portuguese

**Answer: (b) Dutch**

**6. Who were the colonial power in Indonesia?**

- (a) British
- (b) Dutch
- (c) French
- (d) Portuguese

**Answer: (b) Dutch**

**7. Where did the Dutch start forest management in Indonesia?**

- (a) Java
- (b) Sumatra
- (c) Bali
- (d) None of the above

**Answer: (a) Java**

**8. The Kalangs resisted the Dutch in**

- (a) 1700
- (b) 1750
- (c) 1770
- (d) 1800

**Answer: (c) 1770**

## FILL IN THE BLANKS

- 1.The forest management in Java was under the Dutch
- 2.After the Forest Act was enacted in 1865, It was amended twic
- 3.Indian Forest Service was set up in the year 1864
- 4.In shifting cultivation, seeds are sown After cleaning and burning the forest land
- 5.A British administrator killed 400 tigers. His name was George Yule.



## SUMMARY

They enacted forest laws, made huge profits, regulated cultivation, and collected taxes. Furthermore, India lost its forest cover between 1880 and 1920. Timber was cut, transported for shipbuilding, and used to expand railways.