



Question-1

Explain why nomadic tribes need to move from one place to another. What are the advantages to the environment of this continuous movement?

Solution:

People who moved from one place to another, as a community, with all their belongings, were called nomads. These nomads moved from place to place in search of food and a livelihood. The nomadic pastoralists had herds of goats and sheep, or camels and cattle. Finding pasture for their herds was the main purpose of their constant movement.

The nomads moved between their summer and winter grazing grounds. In winter they usually lived on the low hills and the dry scrub forests provided pasture for their herds. They lived on the low hills during winter as the high mountains were snow covered. During summer, that is, by the end of April the nomads packed their belongings, round up their herds and start trekking towards the northern mountains. As the snow melted the mountains were converted into carpets of lush green grass. This provides ample pasture for their herds. The nomadic pastoralists thus moved annually between their summer and winter grazing grounds. When the pasture was exhausted or unusable in one place they moved their herds and flock to new areas.

The continuous movement of the nomads with their grazing herds ensured that the natural pastures were not over used. The movement allowed the grass and foliage to grow again and this preserved the environment.

Question-2

Discuss why the colonial government in India brought in the following laws. In each case, explain how the law changed the lives of pastoralists:

Solution:

Waste Land Rules:

- Uncultivated land was taken over by the colonial government and given to selected individuals. This rule was called Waste Land rules. It was brought into force during the mid-nineteenth century.
- Some of the individuals, who were given this land, by the government, were made headmen. This assured the colonial government their loyalty and support.
- The waste lands that were taken over, were actually grazing tracts, used by the nomadic pastoralists. When this waste land was brought under cultivation by the new owners, the pastoralists lost their grazing grounds and were put to a lot of hardship.

Forest Acts:

- The colonial government passed the Indian Forest Acts in 1865. This Act was amended in the year 1878. Under this amendment the forests were divided into 3 categories, - reserved, protected and village forests.
- The reserved forests were usually forests which produced commercially valuable timber.
- The Forest Act ensured that the total wealth of these forests

could be enjoyed by the colonists alone, as no one was allowed access to these forests.

- Under this Act nomads were not allowed to graze their cattle in these forests. They had to get permit to graze their cattle in a few of these forests. If they overstayed their permit period they were fined or punished. This left the nomads with no pasture for their herds.

Criminal Tribes Act:

- The colonial government in India passed the Criminal Tribes Act in the year 1871. The Act earmarked communities of craftsmen, traders and pastoralists as Criminal Tribes. These communities were forced to live only in notified village settlements, when this Act came into force. They needed a permit to move out of this specified village. The village police also kept a continuous watch over them.
- The moving nomads disturbed the Colonist . They wanted the natives in fixed places with fixed rights so that they could be easily controlled.
- The Criminal Tribes Act was a great insult to the honest hardworking nomads. Their entire way of life was affected .

Grazing Tax:

- Pastoralists had to pay taxes for the animals they grazed on the pastures. This was called the Grazing Tax.
- The colonial government wanted to increase its revenue. Tax was imposed on land, on canal water, on salt, on trade goods, on animals and even on grazing. In the mid- nineteenth century, grazing tax was introduced in most pastoral tracts of India.
- The pastoralists had to show a pass and pay tax to enter a grazing tract. He had to pay tax according to the number of cattle heads he had .This taxation was a terrible burden on the poor pastoralists.The Criminal Tribes Act was a great insult to the honest hardworking nomads. Their entire way of life was affected .

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