

# NTSE

NCERT Solutions for Class 9 Social Science  
HISTORY – Forest Society and Colonialism



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**1. How did changes in the forest management in the colonial period affect the firms trading in timber/forest produce?**

**Ans.** With the coming of the British, trade was completely regulated by the government. The British government gave many large European trading firms the sole right to trade in the forest products of particular areas. Grazing and hunting by local people were restricted.

**2. How did changes in the forest management in the colonial period affect Plantation Workers?**

**Ans.** New opportunities of work did not always mean improved well being for the people. In Assam, both men and women from forest communities like Santhals and Oraons from Jharkhand, and Gonds from Chhattisgarh were recruited to work on tea plantations. Their wages were low and conditions of work were very bad. They could not return easily to their home villages from where they had been recruited.

**3. Explain how the exploitation continued even after independence.**

**Ans.** In the 1970s, the World Bank proposed that 4,600 hectares of natural *sal* forest should be replaced by tropical pine to provide pulp for the paper industry. It was only after protests by local environmentalists that the project was stopped.

**4. What are sarnas, devarakudu, kav, rai, etc.?**

**Ans.** Sarnas, devarakudu. Kav, rai, etc. are all sacred groves protected by communities. These forests are dedicated to Gods or snakes and cutting of trees in these areas are not allowed.

**5. What are the causes for expansion of agriculture in the colonial period?**

**Ans.** (1) As population increased over the centuries and the demand for food went up, peasants extended the boundaries of cultivation, clearing forests and breaking new land.

(2) The British directly encouraged the production of commercial crops like jute, sugar, wheat and cotton.

In the early nineteenth century, the colonial state thought that forests were unproductive. They were considered to be wilderness that had to be brought under cultivation so that the land could yield agricultural products and revenue, and enhance the income of the state.

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## 6. What are the different uses of forest products?

**Ans.** In forest areas, people use forest products – roots, leaves, fruits, and tubers – for many things. Fruits and tubers are nutritious to eat, 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 vahlii*) 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 to light lamps can be pressed from the fruit of the *mahua* tree.

## 7. How were the lives of people affected after the Forest Act of 1865?

**Ans.** (1) The Forest Act meant severe hardship for villagers across the country. After the Act, all their everyday practices – cutting wood for their houses, grazing their cattle, collecting fruits and roots, hunting and fishing – became illegal.

(2) People were now 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.

(3) Women who collected fuel wood were especially worried. It was also common for police constables and forest guards to harass people by demanding free food from them.

## 8. What was shifting cultivation or swidden agriculture?

**Ans.** This was a traditional agricultural practice in many parts of Asia, Africa and South America. In shifting cultivation, parts of the forest 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 forest to grow back. A mixture of crops is grown on these plots. In central India and Africa it could be millets, in Brazil manioc, and in other parts of Latin America maize and beans.

## 9. Why did the British government ban shifting cultivation? What was the result?

**Ans.** (1) British felt that land which was used for cultivation every few years could not grow trees for railway timber.

(2) When a forest was burnt, there was the added danger of the flames spreading and burning valuable timber.

(3) Shifting cultivation also made it harder for the government to calculate taxes. Therefore, the government decided to ban shifting cultivation.

(4) As a result, many communities were forcibly displaced from their homes in the forests. Some had to change occupations, while some resisted through large and small rebellions.

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**10. Explain how hunting became a major cause for reducing the population of animals during the colonial period?**

**Ans.** In India, hunting of tigers and other animals had been part of the culture of the court and nobility for centuries.

Kings and nobles gave rewards for the killing of tigers, wolves and other large animals on the grounds that they posed a threat to cultivators.

Over 80,000 tigers, 150,000 leopards and 200,000 wolves were killed for reward in the period 1875-1925. Gradually, the tiger came to be seen as a sporting trophy.

The Maharaja of Sarguja alone shot 1,157 tigers and 2,000 leopards up to 1957. A British administrator, George Yule, killed 400 tigers.

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