



CLASS NOTES-ANSWERS

Let's recall.

1) Fill in the blanks.

- a) The British described the tribal people as Savage.
- b) The method of sowing seeds in jhum cultivation is known as broadcast.
- 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 coal mines in Bihar state

2) State whether true or false:

- a) Jhum cultivators plough the land and sow the seeds. **False**
- b) Cocoons were brought from the Santhals and sold by the traders at 5 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. **True**

Let's discuss

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

Answer: 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.

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

Answer: Changes in the powers of the tribal chief 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 the 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 people.
- They lost authority they had earlier enjoyed amongst their people.
- Now they were unable to fulfill that traditional functions.

5) What accounts for the anger of the tribals against the dikus?

Answer: The tribals wanted to drive out the dikus, missionaries, money lenders, Hindu land lords and the government because they saw them as the cause of their misery.

The following facts accounts for their anger against the dikus:

- The land policies of the British were destroying their traditional land system.
- Hindu landlords and money lenders were taking over their land.
- Missionaries were criticizing their traditional culture.

6) What was Birsa's vision of a golden age? Why do you think such a vision appeal to the people of the region?

Answer: 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 the 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 will very much eager to lead a free life. They had got fed up with the colonial forest laws and the restrictions that are imposed on them.

Let's do

- 7) Find the names of some heros of other tribal revolts in the twentieth century. Write their story in your own words.

Answer:

Jatra Oraon:

He was a tribal freedom fighter from the Chotanagpur region is the present-day state of Jharkhand. During his leadership Oraon movement against the British colonial rule during 1914-19.

He fought for Oraon raj. He criticized liquor drinking and superstitious practices among Oraons. His religious movement gave way to a "no-rent payment" campaign. Jatra declared that his followers should stop ploughing the field of landlords and not work anymore as coolies or labourers for non-oraons or for the government.

He also questioned the traditional leadership of the Pahans and Mahtos the village headmen. The basic idea behind this movement was that land was a gift of god and that no one had the right to interfere with the tribal right over land.

Jatra, along with his leading disciples was arrested in 1814. After his release, he abandoned the leadership of the movement. Later he came in contact with Mahatma Gandhi and joined the non-cooperation movement against the British.

Rani Gaidinliu:

Rani Gaidinliu was born in the present-day state of Manipur. At the age of 13, she joined in the Indian freedom struggle with Hasipau Jodonang. Jodonang was the political and spiritual leader of naga.



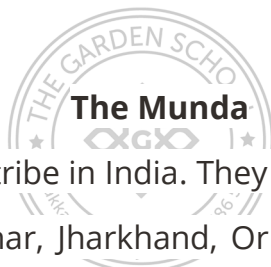
Jodonang started a movement to drive away the British from Manipur. He was captured and hanged by the British.

After the death of her guru, Gaidinliu assumed leadership of the movement. The British tried to suppress the movement. Rani went underground. But, very soon she was arrested in 1932. She was sent to jail.

Gaidinliu was released after India gained its independence. She was honored with Tamrapatra and Padma Bhushan awards, Jawaharlal Nehru called her 'rani' of the nagas. She passed away on February 17, 1993.

- 8) Choose any tribal group living in India today. Find out about their customs and way of life, and how their lives have changed in the last 50 years.

Answer: India has 705 ethnic groups living in the country. They are officially recognised as the 'Scheduled Tribes'. Although there are more to this list, all of them are not officially recognised.



The Munda tribe is the largest tribe in India. They reside in the northern parts of the eastern states of India like Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal. The official language of the Mundas is the Mundari language. They belong to the Austro-Asiatic ethnic group in India. They came to India a hundred years ago. Mundas are a patrilineal clan which means that property transfers from the father to the son. The Munda clans are called 'Killi'. They celebrate the Mage Parab, Phagu, Karam and several other seasonal festivals since they are involved in agriculture. Traditionally the Mundas have been farm labourers, basket weavers and woodcutters. However, Mundas today live in the city because of educational purposes. The Mundas regard themselves as Hindus. However orthodox Hindus do not consider them as Hindus or a part of the traditional caste system. Mundas have developed a lot in the last 50 years. Although they practice the barter system and depend on forests for their food, they lead their lives respectfully.