

NCERT QUESTIONS WITH SOLUTIONS

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

Ans. Nomadic tribes need to move from one place to another to adjust to seasonal changes and make effective use of available pastures in different places. This pattern of cyclical movement between summer and winter pastures is typical of many pastoral communities of the Himalayas, including the Bhotias, Sherpas and Kinnauris. When the pastures were exhausted or unusable in one place they move with their flock to new areas. This continuous movement also allowed the pastures to recover, it prevented their overuse.

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

- (a) Wasteland Rules
- (b) Forest Acts
- (c) Criminal Tribes Act
- (d) Grazing Tax

Ans. (a) Wasteland Rules: Were enacted in various parts of the country. By these rules uncultivated land was taken over and given to selected individuals. In most areas the lands taken over were actually grazing tracts used regularly by pastoralists. So, expansion of cultivation inevitably meant decline of pastures and a problem for pastoralists.

(b) Forests Acts: Were enacted to protect and preserve forests for timber which was of commercial importance. These acts changed the life of pastoralists. They were now prevented from entering many forests that had earlier provided valuable forage for their cattle. They were issued permits which monitored their entry and exit into forests. They could not stay in the forests as much as they liked because the permit specified the number of days and hours they could spend in the forests. The permit ruled their lives.

(c) Criminal Tribes Act: The colonial government wanted to rule over a settled population. They wanted the rural population to live a settled life in villages. People who moved from place to place were looked upon with suspicion and regraded as criminals. The criminal tribes act was passed in 1871 by which many nomadic communities were declared as criminal tribes. They were supposed to be criminal by nature and birth. Once this act came into force, these communities were expected to live in notified village settlements. They were not allowed to move out without permits. The village police kept a continuous watch on them.

(d) Grazing Tax: Was imposed by the colonial government to expand its revenue income. Pastoralists had to pay a tax on every animal they grazed on the pastures. This right was now auctioned out to contractors. They extracted as high a tax as they could; to recover the money they had paid to the state and earn as much profit as they could. Later the government itself started collecting taxes. This created problems for the pastoralists who were harassed by tax collectors. It also became an economic burden on them.

3. Give reasons to explain why the Maasai community lost their grazing lands.

Ans. The Maasais lost their grazing lands due to the following reasons:

- (a) In 1885, Maasai land was cut into half with an international boundary between the British Kenya and German Tanganyika. The best grazing lands were gradually taken over for white settlement. The Maasai lost 60% of their pre-colonial lands.
- (b) From the late 18th century, the British colonial government in East Africa also encouraged local peasant communities to expand cultivation. As cultivation expanded, pasture lands were turned into cultivated fields.
- (c) Large areas of grazing land were also turned into game reserves like the Maasai Mara and Samburu National Park in Kenya. Pastoralists were not allowed to enter these reserves. Very often these reserves were in areas that had traditionally

been regular grazing grounds for Maasai herds. The loss of the finest grazing lands and water resources created pressure on the small area of land that the Maasai were confined within.

4. There are many similarities in the way in which the modern world forced changes in the lives of pastoral communities in India and East Africa. Write about any two examples of changes which were similar for Indian pastoralists and the Maasai herders.

Ans. There are many similarities in the way in which the modern world forced changes in the lives of pastoral communities in India and East Africa. Here are two examples of changes which were similar for Indian pastoralists and the Maasai herders.

- (a) All uncultivated land was seen as wasteland by colonial powers. It produced neither revenue nor agricultural produce. This land was brought under cultivation. In most areas the lands taken over were actually grazing tracts used regularly by pastoralists, so expansion of cultivation inevitably meant the decline of pastures and a problem both for Indian pastoralists and the Maasai.
- (b) From the 19th century onwards, the colonial government started imposing restrictions on the pastoral communities. They were issued permits which allowed them to move out with their stock and it was difficult to get permits without trouble and harassment. Those found guilty of disobeying the rules were severely punished.