

Vidya Bhawan balika Vidyapeeth shakti utthan aashram Lakhisarai

Study material for class 9th

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History

Forest society and colonialism

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Dutch Scientific Forestry

New forest laws were introduced by the Dutch. Villagers' access to the forests was restricted. Permission was given to cut wood only for specific purposes; like making boats and houses. Grazing was banned in young stands. Wood could not be transported and travelling on forest road by horse cart or cattle was also banned.

Wood was cut on large scale to meet the demand for railways and shipping. In 1882 the number of sleepers exported from Java alone was 280,000.

Rent was introduced on villagers who cultivated in the forest. Some villages were exempted in lieu of providing free labour and buffalo for cutting and transporting the wood. This was known as the blandongdiensten system.

Samin's Challenge

Around 1890, Surontiko Samin of Randublatung village, a teak forest village, began questioning state ownership of the forest. He began to convince his folks about the wrong policies of the colonial rulers. Many families joined that rebellion. People protested by lying down on their land when the Dutch came to survey it. Many others refused to pay taxes or fines or do work.

War and Deforestation

The two World Wars had major impacts on forests. More trees were cut to meet the wartime needs of Britain.

In Java, the Dutch followed 'scorched earth' policy just before the Japanese occupation of the region. They destroyed sawmills and burnt huge piles of giant teak logs. The Japanese continued the exploitation of forests. They forced forest villagers to cut down forests. For many villagers, it was an opportunity to expand cultivated area.

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