

Very Short Answer Questions

Q. 1. Describe how company became the Diwan.

Ans. On 12 August 1765, Robert Clive was granted the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa by the Mughal ruler

Q. 2. Write the revenue procedure for the company.

Ans. Before 1865, the company had purchased goods in India by importing gold and silver from Britain. Now revenue collected in Bengal could finance the purchase of goods for export.

Q. 3. In which year was Permanent Settlement introduced by company?

Ans. The company introduced Permanent Settlement in 1793.

Q. 4. What do you mean by Permanent Settlement?

Ans. The amount of revenue the peasants were expected to pay was fixed permanently, that is, it was not to be increased ever in future.

Q. 5. How did Permanent Settlement create problems?

Ans. The revenue that had been fixed was so high that the zamindars found it difficult to pay. Anyone who failed to pay the revenue lost his zamindari.

Q. 6. Who was Charles Cornwallis?

Ans. Charles Cornwallis was the Governor-General of India when the Permanent Settlement was introduced.

Q. 7. What is indigo?

Ans. Indigo is a plant that produces rich blue colour which is used as a dye.

Q. 8. What is Kalamkari print?

Ans. Kalamkari print is created by weavers of Andhra Pradesh in India.

Q. 9. What is nij?

Ans. Nij was the cultivation on planter's own land.

Short Answer Questions

Q. 1. What is Munro system?

Ans. In the British territories in the south, a new system of land revenue was devised which was known as ryotwar or ryotwari. It was tried on a small scale by Captain Alexander Read and developed by Thomas Munro.

Q. 2. The British forced cultivators to produce which crops for Europe?

Ans. The British forced cultivators to produce crops in various parts of India and these were—jute in Bengal, tea in Assam, sugarcane in United Provinces, wheat in Punjab, cotton in Maharashtra and Punjab, rice in Madras.

Q. 3. Why did cloth dyers prefer indigo as dye instead of woad?

Ans. Cloth dyers preferred indigo as a dye because it produced a rich blue colour whereas the dye from woad was pale and dull.

Q. 4. Describe nij cultivation.

Ans. In the nij system, the planter produced indigo in lands that he directly controlled. He either bought the land or rented it from other zamindars and produced indigo by directly employing hired labourers.

Q. 5. Explain the ryoti system.

Ans. Under the ryoti system, the planters forced the ryots to sign a contract, an agreement. They pressurised the village headmen to sign the contract on behalf of the ryots. Those who signed the contract got cash advances from the planters at low rates of interest to produce indigo.

Long Answer Questions

Q. 1. How did indigo attract the foreign traders to India?

Ans. (i) By the end of the eighteenth century, the demand for Indian indigo grew further.

(ii) As the indigo trade grew commercial agents and officials of the company began investing in indigo production.

(iii) Over the years, many company officials left their jobs to look after their indigo business.

(iv) Attracted by the prospect of high profits, numerous Scotsmen and Englishmen came to India and became planters.

Q. 2. What led the setting up of indigo commission by the government?

Ans. (i) To enquire into the system of indigo production led the setting up of indigo commission by the government.

(ii) The commission held the planters guilty and criticised them for the coercive methods they used with indigo cultivators.

(iii) It declared that indigo production was not profitable for ryots.

(iv) The commission asked the ryots to fulfil their existing contracts but also told them that they could refuse to produce indigo in future.

Q. 3. How was indigo produced?

Ans. (i) After the harvest, the indigo plant was taken to the vats, the storage or fermenting vessel, in the indigo factory.

(ii) Three or four vats were needed to manufacture the dye. Each vat had a separate function.

(iii) The leaves stripped off the indigo plant were first soaked in warm water in a vat for several hours.

(iv) When the plants fermented, the liquid began to boil and bubble.

(v) After that rotten leaves were taken out and the liquid was drained into another vat. In the second vat, the solution was continuously stirred and beaten with paddles.

(vi) When the liquid slowly turned green and then blue, lime water was added to the vat.

(vii) The indigo separated out in flakes, a muddy sediment settled at the bottom of the vat and a clear liquid rose to the surface.

(viii) The liquid was drained off and the sediment—the indigo pulp—was transferred to another vat and then pressed and dried for sale.

Q. 4. What was Champaran movement?

Ans. (i) Indigo movement collapsed in Bengal but shifted to Bihar.

(ii) With the discovery of synthetic dyes, their business was severely affected.

(iii) When Mahatma Gandhi returned from South Africa, a peasant from Bihar persuaded him to visit Champaran and see the plight of the Indigo planters there.

(iv) Mahatma Gandhi's visit in 1917 marked the beginning of the Champaran movement against the Indigo planters.

Hots (Higher Order Thinking Skills)

Q. 1. What was 'Blue Rebellion'?

Ans. (i) 'Blue rebellion' started in 1859 when thousands of ryots in Bengal refused to grow indigo.

(ii) Those who worked for the planters were socially boycotted, and the gomasthas—agents of planters—who came to collect rent were beaten up.

(iii) Ryots swore they would no longer take advances to sow indigo nor be bullied by the 'planters' lathiyals.

(iv) In many villages, leaders who had been forced to sign indigo contracts, mobilised indigo peasants and fought pitched battles with the lathiyals.

Q. 2. What were the terms of the Permanent Settlement? What problems did it pose?

Ans. The Permanent Settlement, however, created problems. Company officials soon discovered that the zamindars were in fact not investing in the improvement of land. The revenue that had been fixed was so high that the zamindars found it difficult to pay. Anyone who failed to pay the revenue lost his zamindari.

By the first decade of the 19th century the situation changed. The prices in the market rose and cultivation slowly expanded. This meant an increase in the income of the zamindars but no gain for the Company since it could not increase a revenue demand that had been fixed permanently. Even then the zamindars did not have any interest in improving the land. Some had lost their lands in the earlier years of the settlement.

In the villages, the cultivator found the system extremely oppressive. The rent he paid to the zamindar was high and his right on the land was insecure. To pay the rent he had to often take a loan from the moneylender, and when he failed to pay the rent he was evicted from the land he had cultivated for generations.

Q. 3. Read the extract and answer the questions that follow:

Colebrook on Bengal ryots

In many villages of Bengal, some of the powerful ryots did not cultivate, but instead gave out their lands to others (the under-tenants), taking from them very high rents. In 1806, H. T. Colebrook described the conditions of these undertenants in Bengal:

The under-tenants, depressed by an excessive rent in kind, and by usurious returns for the cattle, seed, and subsistence, advanced to them, can never extricate themselves from debt. In so abject a state, they cannot labour in spirit, while they earn a scanty subsistence without hope of bettering their situation.

(i) Who were under tenants?

(ii) Describe the conditions H.T. Colebrook mentioned about the under tenants in Bengal.

Ans. They had to pay high rents in kind. They were depressed by an excessive rent in kind, and by usurious returns for the cattle, seed, and subsistence, advanced to them, can never extricate themselves from debt. In so abject a state, they cannot labour in spirit.