

Chapter 3 - Ruling the Countryside

Very Short Answer questions

Question 1.

When did the Mughal emperor appoint the East India Company as the Diwan of Bengal?

Answer: On 12th August 1765, the Mughal emperor appointed the East India Company as the Diwan of Bengal.

Question 2.

Which settlement was introduced during 1793?

Answer: Permanent Settlement was introduced during 1793.

Question 3.

Who were appointed to collect rent and pay revenue to the Company during Permanent Settlement?

Answer: Zamindars were appointed to collect rent and pay revenue to the Company during Permanent Settlement.

Question 4.

Who devised the system of Mahalwari?

Answer: Holt Mackenzie devised the Mahalwari system.

Question 5.

What was the conclusion of Permanent Settlement at end?

Answer: Permanent Settlement got failed.

Question 6.

Who initiated and developed the Ryotwari system?

Answer: Captain Alexander Read initiated and Thomas Munro developed the Ryotwari system.

Question 7.

Name the two systems adopted for growing indigo by the cultivators.

Answer: Nij and Ryoti were two systems adopted by the cultivators.

Question 8.

What is meant by Mahal?

Answer: Mahal means village or groups of villages.

Question 9.

What was the aim of the Company after getting Diwani?

Answer: After Diwani the Company aimed at administering the land and organising its revenue resources and this was done in way that could help the Company attaining enough revenue.

Question 10.

What was the difficult task for the Company to be done?

Answer: The Company needed to pacify those who ruled the countryside in past. So it was difficult task to eliminate entirely the past rulers of the countryside of the Company.

Question 11.

What led to minimise the bringing of gold and silver by the Company for trade purpose in India?

Answer: Revenue which was collected from Bengal was sufficient for the Company to purchase goods for exports so the Company started reducing getting gold and silvers for trade purpose.

Question 12.

What was the biggest drawback for zamindars in Permanent Settlement?

Answer: Failure of payment of revenue resulting in loss of the zamindari was the biggest drawback which zamindars faced in Permanent Settlement.

Question 13.

At the time of introduction of permanent settlement who was the governor general of India.

Answer: Charles Cornwallis.

Question 14.

Who was William Morris in the 19th century under British rule?

Answer: William Morris was a famous poet and artist.

Question 15.

By whom was the Morris cotton print designed?

Answer: By William Morris.

Question 16.

By whom was the 'Kalamkari print' was created?

Answer: By the weavers of Andhra Pradesh Kalamkari print was created.

Question 17.

Define 'Famine'.

Answer: Extreme Scarcity of food is termed as Famine.

Question 18.

What was common in Kalamkari and Morris cotton print?

Answer: In both a rich blue colour common by known as 'Indigo' was used.

Question 19.

Define the term 'Indigo'.

Answer: Indigo is a plant that produces the blue colour that is rich and is used as dye.

Question 20.

What is meant by 'Vat'?

Answer: A large tank or tube used to hold liquid, especially in industry.

Question 21.

Who were 'Gomasthas'?

Answer: The agents of Planters.

Question 22.

Who were the 'Lathiyals'?

Answer: Lath – weilding strong men maintained by the planters.

Question 23.

What the role played by women in the cultivation of Indigo?

Answer: The role was to carry the Indigo plant to vats.

Short Answer Type

Question 1.

Define Mahalwari system in short.

Answer:

1. Estimated revenue of each plot within village was added up to calculate revenue which each Mahal (village) had to pay.
2. Revenue demand to be revised periodically.
3. Headmen of Mahal given charge to collect revenue.
4. This is what Mahalwari system was.

Question 2.

Where was the Indigo cultivated by the English and the French?

Answer: The Indigo was cultivated by the English in Jamaica and French use to cultivate it in St. Dominque in the Caribbean Islands.

Question 3.

Define the following terms

(i) Plantation

(ii) Bigha

Answer:

Plantation is an Estate on which crops such as coffee, sugar and tobacco were grown.

Bigha: A measuring unit of land area varying locally.

Question 4.

Briefly describe the system of permanent settlement.

Answer: Under this system Rajas and Taluqdars were recognized as Zamindars and they were asked to collect rent from the peasants and pay revenue to the Company. The amount that was to be paid was fixed permanently and was not to be increased or decreased in future.

Question 5.

What were the drawbacks of Nij cultivation?

Answer: The drawbacks of Nij cultivation are:

1. The planters found it difficult to expand the area under Nij cultivation.
2. Labour force was not easily available.
3. Nij cultivation on a large scale also required many ploughs and bullocks investing on purchase and maintenance of ploughs was a big problem.

Long Answer Type

Question 1.

Briefly explain two following questions.

- (i) Explain the two system adopted for the cultivation of Indigo in India.
- (ii) What did the British realise about the countryside?

Answer:

(i) The two systems adopted for the cultivation of indigo by cultivators were:

1. Nij: In this process cultivators produced indigo on the lands which were under their control.
2. Ryoti: The planters forced Ryots to sign contract, an agreement (i.e. Satta). They also pressurised village headmen to sign contract on behalf of Ryots. This is how the two processes of cultivation of Indigo took place.

(ii) The British realised that the countryside not only yielded revenue, it could also grow crops that Europe required.

1. By the late 18th century the Company was trying expanding the cultivation of opium and indigo.
2. Therefore the British persuaded and forced cultivators in various parts of India to produce other crops.

Question 2.

What was Munro system and what happened in conclusion after Munro system took over a wide area?

Answer: In British territories of south, the new system that was devised came to be known as Ryotwar (or Ryotwari).

1. Tried on small scale by Captain Alexander Read in some areas that were taken over by the Company after the wars with Tipu Sultan.
2. Subsequently developed by Thomas Munro, this system was gradually extended all over south India.
3. There was absence of zamindars in south.
4. Therefore it was argued that it had to be made directly with the cultivators (Ryots) who had tilled the land for generations.
5. Munro thought that the British should act as Paternal father figures to protect the ryots under the in charge.
6. The conclusion was not well as driven by the desire to increase the income from land revenue, officials fixed too high revenue demand.
7. Peasants failed to pay, ryots fled the countryside, the villages became deserted in many regions.
8. Therefore, a complete failure of the Munro system also known as Ryotwari system happened during that time.

Question 3 **Describe the main features of the Permanent Settlement.**

Or

What were the terms of the Permanent Settlement?

Ans. Main features of the Permanent Settlement

- i. The Company finally introduced the Permanent Settlement in 1793.
- ii. By the terms of the settlement, the rajas and taluqdars were recognized as zamindars.
- iii. They were asked to collect rent from the peasants and pay revenue to the Company.
- iv. The amount to be paid was fixed permanently, that is, it was not to be increased ever in future.

v. It was felt that this would ensure a regular flow of revenue into the Company's coffers and at the same time encourage the zamindars to invest in improving the land.

vi. Since the revenue demand of the state would not be increased, the zamindar would benefit from increased production from the land.

Question 4 Why were ryots reluctant to grow indigo?

Ans. Ryots were reluctant to grow indigo because of the following reasons.

- i. Under the ryoti system, the planters forced the ryots to sign a contract, an agreement (satta).
- ii. Those who signed the contract got cash advances from the planters at low rates of interest to produce indigo.
- iii. But the loan committed the ryot to cultivating indigo on at least 25 per cent of the area under his holding.
- iv. When the crop was delivered to the planter after the harvest, a new loan was given to the ryot, and the cycle started all over again.
- v. The price they got for the indigo they produced was very low and the cycle of loans never ended.
- vi. The planters usually insisted that indigo be cultivated on the best soils in which peasants preferred to cultivate rice.
- vii. Indigo, moreover, had deep roots and it exhausted the soil rapidly. After an indigo harvest the land could not be sown with rice.

Question 5 Define the following terms: Mahal, Ryot, Satta, Bigha, Slave and Plantation

Ans. Mahal – In British revenue records mahal is a revenue estate which may be a village or a group of villages.

Ryot - Ryot was a general economic term used throughout India for peasant cultivators.

Satta – Satta means an agreement.

Bigha - A unit of measurement of land. Before British rule, the size of this area varied. In Bengal the British standardised it to about one-third of an acre.

Slave - A person who is owned by someone else – the slave owner. A slave has no freedom and is compelled to work for the master.

Plantation – A large farm operated by a planter employing various forms of forced labour. Plantations are associated with the production of coffee, sugarcane, tobacco, tea and cotton.

Question 6. What were the circumstances which led to the eventual collapse of indigo production in Bengal?

Ans. The circumstances which led to the eventual collapse of indigo production in Bengal were:

- i. The indigo ryots felt that they had the support of the local zamindars and village headmen in their rebellion against the planters.
- ii. The indigo peasants also imagined that the British government would support them in their struggle against the planters.
- iii. The ryots saw the tour of the Lieutenant Governor as a sign of government sympathy for their plight.
- iv. The magistrate Ashley Eden issued a notice stating that ryots would not be compelled to accept indigo contracts.

- v. As the rebellion spread, intellectuals from Calcutta rushed to the indigo districts. They wrote of the misery of the ryots, the tyranny of the planters, and the horrors of the indigo system.
- vi. Worried by the rebellion, the government set up the Indigo Commission to enquire into the system of indigo production. The Commission held the planters guilty, and criticised them for the coercive methods they used with indigo cultivators.
- vii. It declared that indigo production was not profitable for ryots. The Commission asked the ryots to fulfil their existing contracts but also told them that they could refuse to produce indigo in future.
- viii. After the revolt, indigo production collapsed in Bengal.

Extra.....

Question 1

When was the 'Diwani' of Bengal granted to the East India Company?

Solution:

The 'Diwani' of Bengal was granted to the British East India Company, in 1765.

Question 2

During the Mughal rule what was the status of the 'Diwan'?

Solution:

During the rule of the Mughal Empire, the Diwan served as the chief revenue officer of a province.

Question 3

What were the benefits reaped by the East India company as the Diwan of Bengal?

Solution:

With the appointment as the Diwan, the Company became the chief financial Administrator of Bengal. The company could now administer the land and revenue resources of Bengal and could utilize the revenue to meet the expenses of the Company.

The Company now had the liberty to trade in all the goods it wanted to.

Question 4

What were the ambitious plans of the East India Company?

Solution:

The East India Company wanted to colonise the country side and organise revenue resources. Its priority was to redefine the rights of the people. The Company was also keen to produce the crops it wanted, in India.

Question 5

Give a brief description of the 'ryotwari system'.

Solution:

The 'ryotwari system' was introduced by Captain Alexander Read. This system was further developed by Thomas Munroe. According to the new system the revenue was to be collected directly from the farmers or ryots. This was necessary as the zamindari system was not prevalent in the southern regions. The lands of each farmer were separately assessed and the revenue was fixed accordingly. This system was also known as the Munro System.

Question 6

What were the disadvantages of the ryotwari system?

Solution:

The revenue fixed by the British officials in the ryotwari system was too high for the farmers. The farmers who were unable to pay the revenue left the farms. As the farmers left their farms the villages in the region wore a deserted look.

Question 7

Why did the British want to grow the 'indigo plant' in India?

Solution:

The indigo plant grows primarily in the tropics and this was the primary reason for the British to turn to India for the growth of the indigo plant.

By the thirteenth century Indian indigo was being used by cloth manufacturers in Italy, France and Britain to dye cloth.

The demand for Indian indigo grew, as European cloth manufacturers wanted only Indian Indigo as it produced a rich blue colour. Due to this demand the price of Indian indigo rose in the European market and mediated the British to grow more indigo in the Indian soil.

Another reason was the industrialisation of Britain as this resulted in the expansion of cotton production creating an enormous new demand for cloth dyes.

Indigo production in other countries began to decline and the demand for Indian Indigo increased in European countries. This demand made the East India Company to expand the area under indigo cultivation.

Question 8

What were to the two major systems of indigo cultivation in India?

Solution:

The two major systems of indigo cultivation in India were the 'Nij' system of cultivation and the 'Ryoti' system of cultivation.

Question 9

What were the main features of the 'Nij' system of cultivation?

Solution:

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

Question 10

What were the main features of the 'Ryoti' system of cultivation?

Solution:

Under the Ryoti system, the planters forced the ryots or peasants to sign a contract. The village headman was also forced to sign an agreement on behalf of the ryots. The peasants received a loan from the planters to cultivate their land. Due to this the peasants were forced to cultivate indigo in 25% of their land.

The peasants received seeds and ploughs for cultivation from the Planters. They had to cultivate the crop and harvest it. The harvested indigo crop had to be given to the planters.

Question 11

Give a brief description of the method of producing indigo dye?

Solution:

The indigo leaves were fermented in a steeping vat. Then the liquid was extracted and oxidized in a beating vat. Finally a blue precipitate was allowed to form from the liquid in a settling vat. This precipitate was collected, dried, and compacted. This dried compacted material is the indigo dye.

Question 12

When did the 'Blue rebellion' break-out?

Solution:

Indian farmers rebelled against being forced to grow indigo plants. In March 1859, thousands of ryots in Bengal refused to grow indigo. This was known as the 'Blue rebellion'.

Question 13

What were the findings of the Indigo Commission?

Solution:

The Indigo Commission was set up to enquire into the system of indigo production. The Commission declared that the Planters were unfair and that the farmers were not paid enough for their toil. The Commission also stated that in future the farmers could refuse to grow indigo plants and the Planters did not have a right to force them.

Question 14

What was the out come of the Blue Rebellion?

Solution:

After the 'Blue Rebellion', indigo production collapsed in Bengal. Planters shifted their operation to Bihar.