

Ruling the Countryside

Question 1.

The Company tried many experiments to increase the land revenue. Name the Settlement system introduced in the Madras and Bombay presidencies ?

- (a) Permanent Settlement System
- (b) British Settlement System
- (c) Ryotwari Settlement System
- (d) Mahalwari Settlement System

Answer: (c) Ryotwari Settlement System

Question 2.

What is the literal meaning of the Greek word indikon?

- (a) Blue
- (b) Dye
- (c) From India
- (d) From England

Answer: (c) From India

Question 3.

In which year was the Permanent Settlement System started?

- (a) 1900
- (b) 1885
- (c) 1890
- (d) 1793

Answer: (d) 1793

Question 4.

In which year did Bengal witness the Great Famine?

- (a) 1775
- (b) 1770
- (c) 1777
- (d) 1778

Answer: (b) 1770

Question 5.

Why was there a popular demand for Indian indigo in Italy, France and Britain?

- (a) India was the biggest producer of indigo and no other country produced indigo

- (b) There was a ban on indigo import in other countries
- (c) Indigo imports were tax free
- (d) Indigo was used to dye cloth and there was a huge demand

Answer: (d) Indigo was used to dye cloth and there was a huge demand

Question 6.

A few statements with respect to the Bengal economy after the Company had become the Diwan are given. Pick out the one that is not applicable to the Bengal economy.

- (a) The Bengal economy thrived and progressed.
- (b) Artisanal production and agricultural cultivation showed signs of collapse
- (c) The artisans started deserting villages as they were forced to sell their goods to the Company at low prices
- (d) Peasants were unable to pay the dues that were being demanded from them

Answer: (a) The Bengal economy thrived and progressed.

Question 7.

From the given possibilities, which year did the British introduce the Permanent Settlement of Bengal?

- (a) 1793
- (b) 1800
- (c) 1815
- (d) 1780

Answer: (a) 1793

Question 8.

A set of statements on how the Permanent Settlement system was advantageous to the British are given below. Pick out the one that is not applicable

- (a) The revenue amount was not a fixed one and the zamindars did not benefit from increased production from the land.
- (b) The rajas and taluqdars were recognized as zamindars.
- (c) The British could get a continuous flow of revenue .
- (d) This system created a new class of landlords who were loyal to the British.

Answer: (a) The revenue amount was not a fixed one and the zamindars did not benefit from increased production from the land.

Question 9.

From among the regions mentioned below, which region introduced the Mahalwari Settlement System in 1822 ?

- (a) Bombay

- (b) Madras
- (c) Bihar
- (d) Uttar Pradesh

Answer: (d) Uttar Pradesh

Question 10.

What do you mean by nij and ryoti?

- (a) The two main trading centres of indigo
- (b) The two main areas where indigo was cultivated in India
- (c) The two important systems of indigo cultivation
- (d) The two main sets of zamindars

Answer: (c) The two important systems of indigo cultivation

Question 11.

What happened in 1770 in Bengal so that one-third of the population was wiped out?

- (a) The British shipped a lot of locals to Britain and the met with an accident.
- (b) Robert Clive had to wage a battle with the locals and killed many .
- (c) The British and the French had a war in Bengal and many were killed .
- (d) Due to a terrible famine, ten million people in Bengal were wiped out.

Answer: (d) Due to a terrible famine, ten million people in Bengal were wiped out.

Question 12.

Who are called the ryots?

- (a) The landlords
- (b) The women worker who used to carry indigo plant to the vats
- (c) The cultivators or the peasants who actually worked on the land
- (d) The village headmen who controlled the village land

Answer: (c) The cultivators or the peasants who actually worked on the land

Question 13.

Name the Englishman who introduced the Mahalwari Settlement System as a substitute to the Permanent Settlement System.

- (a) Thomas Munro
- (b) Holt Mackenzie
- (c) H T Colebrook
- (d) Alexander

Answer: (b) Holt Mackenzie

Question 14.

How did the Company ask the Rajas to collect revenue?

- (a) Rajas had to give it in the form of jewellery and gold
- (b) Rajas had to give it from their treasury.
- (c) Rajas had to raise revenue by selling their own land .
- (d) Rajas had to collect rent from the peasants and pay revenue to the Company

Answer: (d) Rajas had to collect rent from the peasants and pay revenue to the Company

Question 15.

Given below are some points with regard to the nij cultivation of indigo. Select the one that is not related to the nij cultivation

- (a) The planters produced indigo in the lands that he directly controlled.
- (b) Planters cultivated in lands either bought by them or rented it from other zamindars and produced indigo by directly employing hired labourers
- (c) Planters needed large areas in compact blocks to cultivate indigo
- (d) The planters were forced to sign a contract , an agreement (satta)

Answer: (d) The planters were forced to sign a contract , an agreement (satta)

Question 16.

Why many Scotsmen and Englishmen came to India and became planters ?

- (a) Many rich landlords lost their interest in cultivation, so the Scotsmen and Englishmen became planters to invoke interest among the landlords
- (b) The British relaxed rules for the private ownership of land to the Scotsmen and Englishmen, so they thought they could reap huge profits by cultivating crops.
- (c) Attracted by the prospect of high profits of indigo,they invested money in indigo cultivation and became planters.
- (d) Many Indian farmers auctioned their land because they could not pay the revenue , so the Scottish and Englishmen thought they could become planters and cultivate any crop

Answer: (c) Attracted by the prospect of high profits of indigo,they invested money in indigo cultivation and became planters.

Question 17.

Under the Mahalwari system, the estimated revenue of each plot within a village was added up to calculate the revenue that each mahal had to pay. From the given list of options, which one is closest in meaning to the word mahal ?

- (a) Landlord(s)
- (b) Zamindar(s)

- (c) Tenant(s)
- (d) Village(s)

Answer: (d) Village(s)

Question 18.

What was the chief advantage of the Company when appointed as the Diwan of Bengal?

- (a) The Company helped the artisans to sell their goods at higher prices
- (b) Agricultural production saw an increase in Bengal.
- (c) The Company became the chief financial administrator of the territory under its control and they could raise revenue
- (d) The Company could trade to whichever country they wanted.

Answer: (c) The Company became the chief financial administrator of the territory under its control and they could raise revenue

Question 19.

Who among the following introduced the Ryotwari Settlement system ?

- (a) Thomas Munro
- (b) Holt Mackenzie
- (c) Lord Dalhousie
- (d) Lord Cornwallis

Answer: (a) Thomas Munro

Question 20.

According to the terms of the Permanent Settlement, who were recognized as zamindars?

- (a) Village heads
- (b) Farmers and Peasants
- (c) Rajas and Taluqdars
- (d) British officers

Answer: (c) Rajas and Taluqdars

Question 21.

A set of statements with respect to the ryot cultivation of indigo is given below. Select the one that is not applicable to the ryot cultivation.

- (a) The planter provided the seed and the drill, while the cultivators prepared the soil, sowed the seed and looked after the crop.
- (b) The planters were forced to sign a contract, an agreement (satta)
- (c) Those who signed the contract got cash advances from the planters at low rates

of interest to produce indigo.

(d) The planters produced indigo in the lands that he directly controlled.

Answer: (d) The planters produced indigo in the lands that he directly controlled.

Question 22.

From the given dates, on which date did the Mughal emperor appoint the East India Company as the Diwan of Bengal?

(a) On 12 August 1750

(b) On 12 August 1780

(c) On 12 August 1765

(d) On 12 August 1700

Answer: (c) On 12 August 1765

Very Short Answer Type Question

1. Who and when did the Permanent Settlement introduced in Bengal?

Answer: The Permanent Settlement was introduced by Lord Cornwallis in 1793.

2. What role did women play in the cultivation of indigo?

Answer: Women usually carried the indigo plant to the vats.

3. Who were the gomasthas?

Answer: Gomasthas were the agents of planters.

4. Who was William Morris?

Answer: William Morris, a famous poet and artist of nineteenth-century Britain.

5. Who created Kalamkari print?

Answer: Weavers of Andhra Pradesh in India created Kalamkari print.

6. What are the two main system of indigo cultivation in India?

Answer: There were two main systems of indigo cultivation – nij and ryoti.

7. Who were the lathiyals?

Answer: Lathiyals were the lathi-wielding strongmen maintained by the planters.

8. Where did the English cultivate indigo?

Answer: The English cultivated indigo in Jamaica.

9. Where did the Portuguese begin cultivating indigo?

Answer: The Portuguese began cultivating indigo in in Brazil.

10. Where did the Spanish begin cultivating indigo?

Answer: The Spanish began cultivating indigo in in Venezuela.

11. Who was the President of the Indigo Commission?

Answer: W. S. Seton Karr was the President of the Indigo Commission.

12. Who gave the extensive description of Carribean islands?

Answer: Jean Baptiste Labat wrote extensively about Caribbean islands.

13. Where did the French begin cultivating indigo?

Answer: The French began cultivating indigo in St Domingue in the Caribbean islands.

14. What did the Permanent Settlement actually mean?

Answer: The amount to be paid was fixed permanently, that is, it was not to be increased ever in future.

15. Which tragedy occurred during 1770 in Bengal?

Answer: In 1770 a terrible famine killed ten million people in Bengal. About one-third of the population was wiped out.

16. What is indigo?

Answer: Indigo is a tropical plant which was formerly widely cultivated as a source of dark blue dye.

17. Who hold the responsibility of paying the revenue in the Mahalwari Settlement?

Answer: Village headman holds the responsibility of paying the revenue in the Mahalwari Settlement.

18. What is common in the two prints—a Kalamkari print and a Morris cotton print?

Answer: There is one thing common in the two prints: both use a rich blue colour – commonly called indigo.

19. Where did the slave revolt take place in 1791?

Answer: In the French colony of St Domingue situated in the Caribbean islands, the African slaves who worked in plantations rebelled in 1791.

20. Why did cloth dyers prefer indigo to woad?

Answer: Cloth dyers, however, preferred indigo as a dye because Indigo produced a rich blue colour, whereas the dye from woad was pale and dull.

Short Answer Type Questions

1. Why were Bengal artisans deserting villages?

Answer: Artisans were deserting villages since they were being forced to sell their goods to the Company at low prices. Peasants were unable to pay the dues that were being demanded from them.

2. What was nij cultivation?

Or

Explain nij cultivation.

Answer: Within the system of *nij* cultivation, 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.

3. What problems did zamindars face under the Permanent Settlement?

Answer: 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.

Numerous zamindaris were sold off at auctions organised by the Company.

4. What were the causes of Champaran Movement?

Answer: When Mahatma Gandhi returned from South Africa, a peasant from Bihar persuaded him visit Champaran and see the plight of the indigo cultivators there.

Mahatma Gandhi's visit in 1917 marked the beginning of the Champaran movement against the indigo planters.

5. By the late nineteenth century, the Company forced cultivators in various parts of India to produce which crops?

Answer: The British persuaded or forced cultivators in various parts of India to produce other crops: jute in Bengal, tea in Assam, sugarcane in the United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh), wheat in Punjab, cotton in Maharashtra and Punjab, rice in Madras.

6. How did indigo trade attract foreign traders?

Answer: As the indigo trade grew, commercial agents and officials of the Company began investing in indigo production. Over the years many Company officials left their jobs to look after their indigo business. Attracted by the prospect of high profits, numerous Scotsmen and Englishmen came to India and became planters.

7. Give two problems which arose with the new Munro system of fixing revenue.

Answer: Two problems which arose with the new Munro system of fixing revenue were:

Driven by the desire to increase the income from land, revenue officials fixed too high a revenue demand.

Peasants were unable to pay, ryots fled the countryside, and villages became deserted in many regions.

Long Answer Type Questions

1. By the end of the 18th century, the demand for Indian indigo grew further. What were the reasons behind it?

Or

Why did the demand for Indian indigo increase?

Answer: By the end of the eighteenth century, the demand for Indian indigo grew further. Britain began to industrialise, and its cotton production expanded dramatically, creating an enormous new demand for cloth dyes. While the demand for indigo increased, its existing supplies from the West Indies and America collapsed for a variety of reasons. Between 1783 and 1789 the production of indigo in the world fell by half. Cloth dyers in Britain now desperately looked for new sources of indigo supply.

2. Explain how the Bengal economy landed up in a crisis under the Diwani of the Company.

Or

How did the Bengal economy fall into deep crisis?

Answer: After the Company became the Diwan of Bengal it began its efforts to increase the revenue as much as it could and buy fine cotton and silk cloth as cheaply as possible. Within five years the value of goods bought by the Company in Bengal doubled. Before 1765, the Company had purchased goods in India by importing gold and silver from Britain. Now the revenue collected in Bengal could finance the purchase of goods for export. This caused huge loss of revenue for Bengal which paralysed its economy.

3. Why was the Indigo Commission set up by the government? What were its findings and suggestions?

Answer: Worried by the rebellion, the government brought in the military to protect the planters from assault, and 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. 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.

4. What were the consequences of the economic crisis that gripped Bengal?

Or

State the consequences of the economic crisis that gripped Bengal?

Answer: Consequences of the economic crisis that gripped Bengal

Artisans were deserting villages since they were being forced to sell their goods to the Company at low prices.

Peasants were unable to pay the dues that were being demanded from them.

Artisanal production was in decline, and agricultural cultivation showed signs of collapse.

Then in 1770 a terrible famine killed ten million people in Bengal. About one-third of the population was wiped out.

5. What was the “Blue Rebellion”?

Answer: In March 1859 thousands of ryots in Bengal refused to grow indigo. This was known as the 'Blue rebellion'. As the rebellion spread, ryots refused to pay rents to the planters, and attacked indigo factories armed with swords and spears, bows and arrows. Women turned up to fight with pots, pans and kitchen implements. Those who worked for the planters were socially boycotted, and the gomasthas – agents of planters – who came to collect rent were beaten up. Ryots swore they would no longer take advances to sow indigo nor be bullied by the planters' lathiyals.

7. What was the Munro system?

Or

What was Ryotwari system?

Or

What are the main aspects of Ryotwari system?

Or

Describe the Munro system.

Answer: The new system that was devised came to be known as the ryotwar (or ryotwari). It was tried on a small scale by Captain Alexander Read in some of the areas that were taken over by the Company after the wars with Tipu Sultan.

Subsequently developed by Thomas Munro, this system was gradually extended all over south India. Read and Munro felt that in the south there were no traditional zamindars. The settlement, they argued, had to be made directly with the cultivators (ryots) who had tilled the land for generations. Their fields had to be carefully and separately surveyed before the revenue assessment was made.

8. How was indigo cultivated under the ryoti system?

Answer: Under the ryoti system, the planters forced the ryots to sign a contract, an agreement (satta). At times 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. But the loan committed the ryot to cultivating indigo on at least 25 per cent of the area under his holding. The planter provided the seed and the drill, while the cultivators prepared the soil, sowed the seed and looked after the crop. 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.

9. Give a brief description of the Mahalwari System.

Or

Brief notes on the Mahalwari System.

Or

Describe mahalwari system.

Answer: In the North Western Provinces of the Bengal Presidency, an Englishman called Holt Mackenzie devised the new system which came into effect in 1822. He

felt that the village was an important social institution in north Indian society and needed to be preserved. Under his directions, collectors went from village to village, inspecting the land, measuring the fields, and recording the customs and rights of different groups. The estimated revenue of each plot within a village was added up to calculate the revenue that each village (mahal) had to pay. This demand was to be revised periodically, not permanently fixed. The charge of collecting the revenue and paying it to the Company was given to the village headman. This system came to be known as the mahalwari settlement.

10. What were the problems faced by the planters in the NIJ system?

Or

What were the problems with nij cultivation?

Or

Why were planters reluctant to expand the area under nij cultivation till the late 19th century?’

Answer: The problems faced by the planters in the nij system were:

The planters found it difficult to expand the area under nij cultivation. Indigo could be cultivated only on fertile lands, and these were all already densely populated.

Only small plots scattered over the landscape could be acquired. Planters needed large areas in compact blocks to cultivate indigo in plantations.

Nor was labour easy to mobilise. A large plantation required a vast number of hands to operate. And labour was needed precisely at a time when peasants were usually busy with their rice cultivation.

Nij cultivation on a large scale also required many ploughs and bullocks. Investing on purchase and maintenance of ploughs was a big problem.

11. Why did the indigo cultivators decide to rebel? How did they show their anger?

Or

Why did the indigo cultivators decide to rebel?

Or

Why did the indigo peasants decide they would no longer remain silent?

Answer: The condition under which the indigo cultivators had to work was intensely oppressive. Finally they decided not to grow indigo. They became united and rebelled. They showed their anger in the following ways:

Ryots refused to pay rents to the planters, and attacked indigo factories armed with swords and spears, bows and arrows.

Women turned up to fight with pots, pans and kitchen implements.

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

Ryots swore they would no longer take advances to sow indigo nor be bullied by the planters’ lathiyals.

12. What problems did Permanent Settlement pose?

Answer:

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.

By the first decade of the nineteenth 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.

Some had lost their lands in the earlier years of the settlement; others now saw the possibility of earning without the trouble and risk of investment. As long as the zamindars could give out the land to tenants and get rent, they were not interested in improving the land.

13. Describe different stages of the production of indigo.

Or

How was indigo produced?

Answer: After harvest, the indigo plant was taken to the vats in the indigo factory. Three or four vats were needed to manufacture the dye. Each vat had a separate function. The leaves stripped off the indigo plant were first soaked in warm water in a vat for several hours. When the plants fermented, the liquid began to boil and bubble. Now the rotten leaves were taken out and the liquid drained into another vat that was placed just below the first vat. In the second vat the solution was continuously stirred and beaten with paddles. When the liquid gradually turned green and then blue, lime water was added to the vat. Gradually the indigo separated out in flakes, a muddy sediment settled at the bottom of the vat and a clear liquid rose to the surface. The liquid was drained off and the sediment – the indigo pulp – transferred to another vat (known as the settling vat), and then pressed and dried for sale.

14. Describe the main features of the Permanent Settlement.

Or

What were the terms of the Permanent Settlement?

Answer: Main features of the Permanent Settlement

The Company finally introduced the Permanent Settlement in 1793.

By the terms of the settlement, the rajas and taluqdars were recognized as zamindars.

They were asked to collect rent from the peasants and pay revenue to the Company.

The amount to be paid was fixed permanently, that is, it was not to be increased ever in future.

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.

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

15. Why were ryots reluctant to grow indigo?

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

Under the ryoti system, the planters forced the ryots to sign a contract, an agreement (satta).

Those who signed the contract got cash advances from the planters at low rates of interest to produce indigo.

But the loan committed the ryot to cultivating indigo on at least 25 per cent of the area under his holding.

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.

The price they got for the indigo they produced was very low and the cycle of loans never ended.

The planters usually insisted that indigo be cultivated on the best soils in which peasants preferred to cultivate rice.

Indigo, moreover, had deep roots and it exhausted the soil rapidly. After an indigo harvest the land could not be sown with rice.

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

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

The indigo ryots felt that they had the support of the local zamindars and village headmen in their rebellion against the planters.

The indigo peasants also imagined that the British government would support them in their struggle against the planters.

The ryots saw the tour of the Lieutenant Governor as a sign of government sympathy for their plight.

The magistrate Ashley Eden issued a notice stating that ryots would not be compelled to accept indigo contracts.

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.

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.

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.

After the revolt, indigo production collapsed in Bengal.