

CHAPTER-3

RULING THE COUNTRYSIDE

EXERCISES

1. What attracted European trading companies to India?

Answer:

1. The fine qualities of cotton and silk produced in India.
2. Indian spices such as pepper, cloves, cardamom, and cinnamon.

2. What were the areas of conflict between the Bengal Nawabs and the East India Company?

Answer:

1. The Bengal nawabs asserted their power and autonomy and refused to grant the Company concessions,
2. They demanded large tributes for the Company's right to trade,
3. They denied the Company any right to mint coins,
4. They stopped the Company from extending its fortifications
5. Accusing the Company of deceit, they claimed that the Company was depriving the Bengal government of huge amounts of revenue and undermining the authority of the nawab. It was refusing to pay taxes, writing disrespectful letters, and trying to humiliate the nawab and his officials. These were the areas of conflict between the Bengal Nawabs and the East India Company.

3. How did the assumption of Diwani benefit the East India Company?

Answer:

The Mughal emperor, in 1765, appointed the Company's the Diwan of the provinces of Bengal. The Diwani allowed the Company to exploit the vast revenue resources of Bengal. This solved a major problem that the company had earlier faced. Although its trade had expanded, it had to buy most of the goods in India with gold and silver imported from Britain. The overflow of gold from Britain stopped after the assumption of Diwani. Now revenue from India could finance Company expenses. These revenues they used to purchase cotton and silk textiles in India maintain Company troops and meet the cost of building the Company fort and offices at Calcutta.

4. Explain the system of ‘subsidiary alliance’.

Answer:

Under the system of ‘subsidiary alliance’, Indian rulers were not allowed to have their independent armed forces. They were to be protected by the Company, but had to pay for the ‘subsidiary forces’ that the Company was supposed to maintain for the purpose of this protection. If the Indian rulers failed to make the payment, the part of their territory was taken away as penalty. The states which had to lose their territories on this ground were Awadh and Hyderabad.

1 Mark Questions

1. When was the ‘Diwani’ of Bengal granted to the East India Company?

Answer:

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

2. During the Mughal rule what was the status of the ‘Diwan’?

Answer:

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

3. What were the ambitious plans of the East India Company?

Answer:

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.

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

Answer:

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

5. What were the main features of the ‘Nij’ system of cultivation?

Answer:

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.

6. When did the ‘Blue rebellion’ break-out?

Answer:

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’.

7. What was the outcome of the Blue Rebellion?

Answer:

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

2 Mark Questions

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

Answer:

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.

2. Give a brief description of the ‘ryotwari system’.

Answer:

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.

3. What were the disadvantages of the ryotwari system?

Answer:

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.

4 Mark Questions

1. Why did the British want to grow the ‘indigo plant’ in India?

Answer:

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 color. 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 industrialization 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.

2.What were the main features of the ‘Ryoti’ system of cultivation?

Answer:

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.

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

Answer:

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.

4. What were the findings of the Indigo Commission?

Answer:

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.

5 Mark Questions

1. Explain the significance of the 'Ruling the Countryside' during ancient civilizations and its impact on societal structures.

Answer:

'Ruling the Countryside' held immense significance in ancient civilizations as it established the foundation for societal organization and power structures. This system involved the allocation of land to nobles or elite classes, who in turn exercised control over the rural regions. This control was often achieved through the implementation of administrative systems, taxation, and the establishment of hierarchies.

One primary impact of this ruling system was the consolidation of power within the hands of the ruling elite. They controlled agricultural resources and labor, enabling them to amass wealth and exert authority over the rural population. This centralized control also facilitated the collection of taxes and provision of protection, ensuring stability within these regions.

Furthermore, the 'Ruling the Countryside' system contributed significantly to the development of social hierarchies. It established a clear distinction between the ruling class and the common people, often leading to disparities in wealth and societal status. This division played a pivotal role in shaping social structures, fostering the growth of classes within societies.

2. Explain the significance of land revenue systems in the context of rulers controlling the countryside during ancient times in India.

Answer:

The land revenue systems played a pivotal role in how rulers controlled the countryside in ancient India. These systems were crucial tools for revenue collection and asserting authority over rural areas. Here are some key points regarding their significance:

1. **Revenue Collection:** Land revenue systems were mechanisms through which rulers collected taxes from peasants based on land cultivation. These revenues were essential for the sustenance of the state machinery, including the army, administration, and infrastructure development.
2. **Control and Authority:** Implementing these systems allowed rulers to establish direct control over the countryside. They appointed officials to assess and collect taxes, thereby extending their influence to remote rural areas.
3. **Social and Economic Impact:** The imposition of land revenue systems had far-reaching effects on the social and economic fabric of society. It often led to the exploitation of peasants by landlords and officials, causing economic distress and social upheaval in rural communities.
4. **Legal Framework:** These systems laid down a legal framework for land ownership, cultivation, and revenue collection. This legal structure helped in maintaining records, resolving disputes, and establishing the authority of the ruling class over land resources.
5. **Stability and Governance:** Efficient revenue systems ensured a steady income for the rulers, contributing to the stability and governance of the kingdom. It allowed them to finance various developmental activities and maintain law and order.

Fill in the blanks

1. The system of land revenue was known as _____ during the Mughal period.
2. The British introduced the system of _____ to govern the countryside effectively.
3. The zamindars were powerful _____ who collected revenue from the peasants.
4. The Permanent Settlement was implemented by the British in _____.
5. The Ryotwari System was introduced by the British in parts of _____.
6. The _____ system allowed the British to establish control over the revenue collection in the countryside.

Answers:

1. 'Zabt' or 'Zamindari'
2. 'Permanent Settlement' or 'Ryotwari System'
3. 'Landlords' or 'Tax Collectors'
4. 1793 (in Bengal)
5. Madras, Bombay, and parts of the Presidencies
6. Land Revenue System

Multiple Choice Questions

1. What was the name of the tax that the peasants had to pay to the Mughal rulers?
 - A. Kharaj
 - B. Zamindari
 - C. Ryotwari
 - D. Jaziya

2. Who were the intermediaries between the Mughal rulers and the peasants in the countryside?

- A. Zamindars
- B. Artisans
- C. Peasants
- D. Soldiers

3. The Mughal Empire's revenue system was based on:

- A. Tax-free collections
- B. Fixed tax rates
- C. Arbitrary tax collection
- D. Land revenue

4. Which of the following statements about the zamindars is true?

- A. They were responsible for collecting taxes and maintaining law and order.
- B. They were elected by the peasants.
- C. They were exempted from paying taxes.
- D. They had no power in the countryside.

5. Who among the following used to assess and collect revenue from the peasants?

- A. Emperors
- B. Zamindars
- C. Priests
- D. Artisans

Answer:

(i) (d), (ii) (a), (iii) (d), (iv) (a), (v) (b)

Match the items given in Column A correctly with those given in Column B.

Column A	Column B
(i) Ryotwari System	(a) A land-revenue system where the village or a group of villages was considered as a revenue unit.
(ii) Mahalwari System	(b) A system introduced by the British in India where fixed revenue was imposed on land, benefiting the landlords. ³
(iii) Permanent Settlement	(c) Landlords who collected revenue from peasants in colonial. ⁵
(iv) Revenue Farmers	(d) A land-revenue system where the peasants were directly responsible for paying taxes to the government. ¹
(v) Zamindars	(e) Intermediaries who collected taxes from peasants on behalf of the state or rulers. ⁴

Answer:

(i) (d), (ii) (a), (iii) (b), (iv) (e), (v) (c)

SUMMARY

Chapter 3 of Our Pasts-III deals with East India Company (EIC) taking over the Bengal administration. Students will read about how East India Company acquired the Diwani rights, starting with Robert Clive, who accepted the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa from the Mughal ruler in 1765.

The students will also get to know about the following topics:

1.

1. The Company Becomes the Diwan

a. Revenue for the Company

b. The need to improve agriculture

- c. The problem
- d. A new system is devised
- e. The Munro system
- f. All was not well

2.

2. Crops for Europe

- a. Does color have a history?
- b. Why the demand for Indian indigo?
- c. Britain turns to India
- d. How was indigo cultivated?
- e. The problem with Nij cultivation
- f. Indigo on the land of ryots

3. The “Blue Rebellion” and after

Our Pasts-III is an important book for Class 8 Social Science subject. Students are advised to practice all the questions on a regular basis which yields good results in the main examinations.