

Chapter 3- Ruling the Countryside

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Let's Recall

1. Match the following:

<i>ryot</i>	village
<i>mahal</i>	peasant
<i>nij</i>	cultivation on <i>ryot</i> 's lands
<i>ryoti</i>	cultivation on planter's own land

Answer

<i>ryot</i>	peasant
<i>mahal</i>	village
<i>nij</i>	cultivation on planter's own land
<i>ryoti</i>	cultivation on <i>ryot</i> 's lands

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2. Fill in the blanks:

- (a) Growers of woad in Europe saw _____ as a crop which would provide competition to their earnings.
- (b) The demand for indigo increased in the late-eighteenth-century Britain because of _____.
- (c) The international demand for indigo was affected by the discovery of _____.
- (d) The Champaran movement was against _____.

Answer

(a) Growers of woad in Europe saw indigo as a crop which would provide competition to their earnings.

(b) The demand for indigo increased in the late-eighteenth-century Britain because of the expansion of cotton production as a result of industrialisation, which in turn created an enormous demand for cloth dyes.

(c) The international demand for indigo was affected by the discovery of synthetic dyes.

(d) The Champaran movement was against indigo planters.

Let's Discuss

3. Describe the main features of the Permanent Settlement.

Answer

In order to get a stable revenue income, most of the East India Company's officials believed that investment in land had to be encouraged and agriculture had to be improved. This led to introduction of 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.

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

→ If the zamindars failed to pay the revenue, which they usually did as the fixed revenue was very high, they lost their zamindari.

4. How was the mahalwari system different from the Permanent Settlement?

Answer

<i>Mahalwari Settlement</i>	Permanent Settlement
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The <i>mahalwari</i> system, devised by Holt Mackenzie, came into effect in 1822, in the North Western provinces of the Bengal Presidency.	The Permanent Settlement was introduced in 1793 by Lord Cornwallis.
It was devised as an alternative to the Permanent Settlement.	It was aimed at ensuring stable revenue for the East India Company.
The village headmen were in charge of collecting revenue.	The <i>rajas</i> and <i>taluqdars</i> were in charge of collecting revenue.
The revenue amount was not fixed, and was to be revised periodically. The estimated revenue of each plot within a village was added up to calculate the revenue that each village or <i>mahal</i> had to pay.	The revenue amount was fixed and was never to be increased in the future.

5. 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 ryats fled the countryside and villages became deserted in many regions.

6. Why were ryots reluctant to grow indigo?

Answer

The ryots reluctant to grow indigo because:
→ The planters paid a very low price for indigo.
→ The ryots was not in a position to even recover his cost, earning a profit was a far-fetched idea. This meant that the ryot was always under debt.
→ The planters insisted that the peasants cultivate indigo on the most fertile parts of their land, but the peasants preferred growing rice on the best soils as after an indigo harvest, the land could not be used for sowing rice.

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

Answer

The ryots began to refuse to grow indigo. They were supported by the village headmen and some zamindars in their fight. The scale of protest was so much that the government had to intervene. The Indigo Commission was set up to enquire into the problems. The Commission accepted the faults of the planters and allowed the ryots to grow whatever they wished. This led to eventual collapse of indigo production in Bengal.