



### SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Question 1. How did the Bengal economy fall into a 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.

Question 2. What were the consequences of the economic crisis that gripped Bengal?

Answer: The consequences of the economic crisis that gripped Bengal were as given below:

- (a) Artisans began to leave villages since they were being forced to sell their goods to the Company at low prices.
- (b) Peasants were unable to pay the dues that were being demanded from them.
- (c) Artisanal production was in decline and agricultural cultivation showed signs of collapse.
- (cf) The most terrible consequence came to be seen in 1770 when a terrible famine hit Bengal killing ten million people. About one- third of the population was wiped out.

Question 3. Give a brief description of the Mahalwari System.

Answer: The Mahalwari System was devised by an Englishman called Holt Mackenzie which came into effect in 1822. He felt that the village was an important social institution in north Indian society that needed to be preserved. Under his directions collectors went from village to village inspecting the land, measuring the field 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, i.e. mahal had to pay. This demand was to be revised periodically. The village headman was given the charge of collecting the revenue and paying it to the Company.

Question 4. What was the Munro system? or what was Ryotwari system?

Answer: In the British territories in the south a new system was devised that came to be known as the Ryotwari system. It was tried on a small-scale by Captain Alexander Read. Afterwards, Thomas Munro, who was the Governor of Madras, developed this system which gradually extended all over south India.

In the south there were no traditional zamindars. Hence, the settlement was made directly with the cultivators or ryots who had tilled the land for generations. Their fields were separately surveyed before the revenue assessment was made.

Question 5. By the end of the 18th century, the demand for Indian indigo grew further. What were the reasons behind it?

Answer: This was the time when Britain began industrialise. As a result 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. Between 1783 and 1789 the production of indigo in the world fell by half. Cloth dyers in Britain now began to look for new sources of indigo supply.

Question 6. How did indigo trade attract foreign traders?

Answer: Indigo trade flourished during the last decades of the 18th century. As a result 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. Those who had no money to produce indigo could get loans from the Company and the banks that were coming up at that time.

Question 7. How was indigo cultivated under the ryoti system?

Answer: Under the ryoti system, the planters forced the ryots (cultivators) to sign a contract or an agreement also known as satta. At times they pressurised the village headmen to sign the contract on behalf of the ryots. Those who sign 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% 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.

Question 8. Why did the indigo cultivators decide to rebel? How did they show their anger?

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:

- (a) They refused to pay rents to the planters, and attacked indigo factories armed with swords and spears, bows and arrows.
- (b) Women turned up to fight with pots, pans and kitchen equipments.
- (c) The Gomasthas, agents of planters, were beaten up, when they came collect rent.

Question 9. Why was the Indigo Commission set up by the government? What were its findings and suggestions?

Answer: 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 grow indigo in future.

\*\*\*\*\* END \*\*\*\*\*