



Question 9. What do you understand by the drain of Indian wealth during the colonial period?

Answer. Drain of wealth means that economic policies of the British in India were primarily motivated to snatch maximum benefits from India's trade. India's foreign trade generated large export surplus. This export surplus did not result in any flow of gold or silver into India. There was drain of India's wealth into Britain. It is clear from the following facts :

1. The surplus was used to make payments for the expenses incurred by the office set up by the colonial government in Britain.
2. The surplus was used to pay expenses on war fought by the British government.
3. Surplus was used to pay for the import of invisible items.

Question 10. Which is regarded as the defining year to mark the demographic transition from its first to the second decisive stage?

Answer. 1921 is the defining year. It is called 'Year of Great Divide'.

Question 11. Give a quantitative appraisal of India's demographic profile during the colonial period.

Answer. The demographic condition on the eve of independence was as follows:

1. High Birth Rate and Death Rate. High birth rate and high death rate are treated as indices of backwardness of a country. Both birth rate and death rate were very high at 48 and 40 per thousand of persons respectively.
2. High Infant Mortality Rate. It refers to death rate of children below the age of one year. It was about 18 per thousand live births.
3. Low Life Expectancy. Life expectancy means the number of years that a new born child on an average is expected to live. It was as low as 32 years.
4. Mass Illiteracy. Mass illiteracy among the people of a country is taken as an indicator of its poverty and backwardness. The population census of 1941 (which was the last census under the British rule) estimated the literacy rate at 17 per cent. This means that 83 per cent of the total population was illiterate.
5. Low Standard of Living. At the time of independence, people used to spend between 80 to 90 percent of their income on basic necessities, that is on food, clothing and housing. Even then, people did not get adequate quantity of food or clothing or housing and millions of people starved, went naked and lived in huts or in the open. Moreover, some parts of India came under severe famine conditions. The famines were so severe that millions died. One of the worst famines in India was the Bengal famine of 1943, when three million people died.

Question 12. Highlight the salient features of India's pre-independence occupational structure.

Answer. Occupational structure means the distribution of work-force among different sectors of an economy. The state of occupational structure on the eve of independence was as follows:

1. Pre-dominance of Agriculture Sector. The agricultural sector accounted for the largest share of work-force, which was 72 per cent. The manufacturing and service sectors accounted for 10 per cent and 18 per cent respectively.
2. Growing Regional Variations. There was growing regional variation. In the states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra and West Bengal, the dependence of the workforce on the agricultural sector declined. On the other hand, there was increase in the share of work force in the agriculture sector in the states of Orissa, Rajasthan and Punjab.
Thus, India's occupational structure was static and imbalanced.

Question 13. Underscore some of India's most crucial economic challenges at the time of independence.

Answer. Most crucial economic challenges at the time of independence were:

1. Little industrialisation and decline of handicrafts.
2. Low agricultural output and high imports of grains.
3. Low figure of national income and per capita income which showed extreme poverty.
4. Very sluggish economic progress.'
5. Unemployment and underemployment.
6. Very high infant mortality rate, low life expectancy and low standard of living.

Question 14. When was India's first official census operation undertaken?

Answer. First official census was undertaken in the year 1881.

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