



SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Question 1. How were Indian textiles viewed in the world market?

Answer: India was the largest producer of cotton textiles in the world before the British conquered Bengal around 1750. Indian textiles had long been renowned both for their fine quality and exquisite craftsmanship. They were extensively traded in Southeast Asia (Java, Sumatra and Penang) and West and Central Asia. From the 16th century European trading companies began buying Indian textiles for sale in Europe.

Question 2. How did the inventions of Spinning Jenny and Steam Engine revolutionise cotton textile weaving in England?

Answer: Textile industries had just emerged in England in the early 18th century.

So, it was difficult for the English producers to compete with Indian textiles. This competition with Indian textiles led to a search for technological innovation in England. In 1764, the Spinning Jenny was invented by John Kaye which increased the productivity of the traditional spindles.

Then came the steam engine. It was invented by Richard Arkwright in 1786. These two inventions revolutionised cotton textile weaving in England. Cloth could now be woven in immense quantities and cheaply too.

Question 3. Give a description of the four regions where textile production was concentrated in the early 19th century.

Answer: Textile production was concentrated in the following four regions in the early 19th century:

(a) Bengal was one of the most important centres. Located along the numerous rivers in the delta, the production centres in Bengal could easily transport goods to distant places.

(b) Dacca in Eastern Bengal, present-day Bangladesh, was the foremost textile centre in the 18th century. It was famous for its mulmut and jamdani weaving.

(c) Textile production was concentrated along the Coromandal coast stretching from Madras to northern Andhra Pradesh.

(d) On the western coast there were important weaving centres in Gujarat.

Question 4. Who were the weavers? Name some communities famous for weaving.

Answer: Weavers often belonged to communities that specialised in weaving. Their skills were passed on from one generation to the next.

List of some communities famous for weaving includes:

(a) the tanti weavers of Bengal.

(b) the julahas or momin weavers of north India.

(c) sale and kaikollar and devangs of South India.

Question 5. Describe the process of cloth making.

Answer: The process of cloth making consists of two stages:

- The first stage of production was spinning, i.e. work done mostly by women. The charkha and the takli were household spinning instruments. The thread was spun on the charkha

and rolled on the takli.

- When the spinning was over the thread was woven into cloth by the weaver.
- In most communities weaving was a task done by men. For coloured textiles, the thread was dyed by the dyer, called rangrez. For painted cloth the weavers needed the help of specialist block printers called chhipigars.

Question 6. Handloom production did not completely die in India. Why?

Answer: This was because some types of cloths could not be supplied by machines. Just take the examples of saris with intricate borders and cloths with traditional woven patterns. Machines could not produce them. These had a wide demand not only amongst the rich but also amongst the middle classes. Moreover, the textile manufacturers in Britain could not produce the very coarse cloths used by the poor people in India.

In the late 19th century, Sholapur and Madurai grew as important new centres of weaving. During the national movement, Gandhiji urged people to use hand-spun and handwoven cloth Khadi which gradually became a symbol of nationalism.

Question 7. Give a brief description of growth of cotton mills in India.

Answer: The first cotton mill in India was set up as a spinning mill in Bombay in 1854. By 1900, over 84 mills started operating in Bombay. Mills were set up in other cities too. The first mill in Ahmedabad was started in 1861. A year later a mill was established in Kanpur, in the United Provinces. Growth of cotton mills led to a demand for labour. As a result, thousands of poor peasants, artisans and agricultural labourers moved to cities to work in the mills.

Question 8. Who are the Agarias? Why did they leave their village?

Answer: The Agarias are a community of iron smelters. They are specialised in the craft of iron smelting.

In the late 19th century a series of famines devastated the dry tracts of India. In central India, many of the Agaria iron smelters stopped work, deserted their villages and migrated, looking for some other work to survive the hard times. A large number of them never worked their furnaces again.

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