

Symposium Class 8 SS Lesson – Weavers, Iron Smelters and Factory owners

Speaker 1 Good morning friends, In this presentation we will discuss the story of the crafts and industries of India during the British Empire. Our main focus would be on two industries i.e. textile and Iron and Steel. The topic will be covered by,, and..... With industrialization in England, the British started looking for new markets to sell their goods. They were also in search of places from where they could get raw material for these industries. It led to conquest and colonization of India. Later on Indian markets was flooded with the British goods. Mechanized production of cotton textiles made Britain the foremost industrial nation in the nineteenth century. And when its iron and steel industry started growing from 1850s, Britain came to be known as the "Workshop of the world". With the growth of industrial production, British industrialists began to see India as a vast market for their industrial products. Now will take this discussion further.

Speaker 2 Around 1750, before the British conquered Bengal, India was world's largest producer of cotton textiles. It was famous both for its fine quality and exquisite craftsmanship. From the sixteenth century European trading companies began buying Indian textiles for sale in Europe. It was carried to Europe by Arabian merchants who were from Mosul, a city in today's Iraq. The name muslin was given to all finely woven textile. Portuguese arrived at Calicut in search of spices. They started to call 'calico' to cotton textiles, along with spices which they took back to Europe. Then calico became the general name for all cotton textiles. Europeans ordered in bulk the pieces of printed cotton clothes called chintz, *cossaes* and bandanna. Chintz derived from Hindi word chhint, a cloth with small and colorful flowery designs. In the same way bandanna derived from word bandanna which means many bright coloured clothes produced by a method of tying and dying. Bandanna now refers to any brightly coloured and printed scarf for the neck or head. Now will discuss how the development of cotton industries in Britain affect textile producers in India?

Speaker 3 In 1720, the British government passed a legislation the Calico Act. By enacting this they banned the use of printed cotton textiles - chintz in England. English producers wanted a secure market within the country by preventing the entry of Indian textiles. To compete with Indian textiles the search for technological innovation in England started. In 1764, the spinning jenny was invented by John Kay which increased the productivity of the traditional spindles. Richard Arkwright invented steam engine in 1786 which revolutionised cotton textile weaving. Indian textiles continued to dominate world trade till the end of 18th century. The

most decisive factor for the decline of the demand of Indian cloth was competition -Indian textiles had to compete with British textiles in European and American markets. Another factor was imposition of high duties on Indian textiles imported into Britain. This made Exporting textiles to England increasingly difficult.

The foreign markets were captured by the British in the beginning of the nineteenth century. This led to throwing thousands of Indian weavers out of employment. The English and European companies stopped buying Indian textiles. The agents of these companies stopped giving out advances to weavers to secure supplies. Finally By the 1830s the Indian market was flooded with cotton produced in Britain . By the 1880s, two-third of all cotton clothes worn by Indians were made of cloth produced in Britain. This greatly affected both the weavers and the spinners. Next speaker..... will discuss about the weavers and stages of production of cotton fabric.

Speaker 4 The communities famous for weaving were the Tanti weavers of Bengal, the julahas or Momin weavers of north India and kailallar and devangs of south India.

In the production of cotton fabric the first stage was spinning mostly done by the women. After spinning the thread was woven into cloth by weavers. Weaving was done mostly by the men. The thread was dyed by the dyer known by the name rangrez to give it colours. For printed cloth the weavers needed the help of specialist block printers known as *chhipigars*. The development of British cotton industry affected the Indian textile producers adversely. British imposed heavy duties on Indian goods which led to decline of Indian textiles. As Indian weavers and spinners became unemployed, they changed their profession. By the 1830s British cotton cloth flooded Indian markets. In fact by the 1880s two thirds of all the cotton clothes worn by Indians were made of cloth produced in Britain. 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 mostly by Parsi and Gujarati businessmen. Now I hand over podium to Who will discuss about Wootz steel.

Speaker 5 The sword of Tipu Sultan was of Wootz steel. Wootz was a high carbon steel produced all over south India. It was produced in many hundreds of smelting furnaces. Wootz is an anglicised version of the Kannada word *ukku*, Telugu *hukku* and Tamil and Malayalam *urukku* – meaning steel. However, the Wootz steel making process, which was so widely known in south India, was completely lost by the mid-nineteenth century. One of the reasons of decline of Indian iron smelting industry in the 19th century was the new forest laws passed by British. As colonial government prevented people from entering the reserved forests, they were unable to find wood for charcoal. They were unable to collect wood so long by defying forest laws. So many gave up their craft and looked for other means of

livelihood. In some areas government granted the people to enter the forests but they had to pay very high tax for every furnace they used. It reduced their income more over they faced new competition from British manufacturers. That's why Indian iron smelting industry declined in the 19th century. Another factor was import of iron and steel from Britain in the late nineteenth century. Ironsmiths began using the imported iron to manufacture utensils and implements. This reduced the demand for iron produced by local smelters. Lastly In the late nineteenth century, a series of famines devastated the dry tracts of India. As a result, many of the local smelters stopped work, deserted their villages, and migrated looking for some other work. With this we come to an end of our symposium/presentation. Thank You.

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