

4. British Exploitation and Resistance

Lets Assess

1. Question

'The revenue policy of the British was the major cause for the decline of agricultural sector in India'. Examine this statement by analysing the features of the permanent settlement.

Answer

The permanent settlement was a land revenue system introduced by the British in the provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. The following were salient features of this system:

1. The ownership of farmland was transferred from the farmer to the landowner, called Zamindar. He was responsible for collecting taxes from the farmers under his supervision.
2. The farmers were hence reduced to tenants, who had to pay taxes on their produce.
3. The taxes paid could be as high as 60 per cent of the yield, which financially burdened the tenants.
4. The taxes had to strictly be paid in cash- crop was not accepted. These taxes had to be paid before harvest season.
5. The land revenue policies several affected the farmers. Since they could not to pay tax in the form of money before the harvest, they were forced to take loan from moneylenders at a high rate of interest, by mortgaging agricultural land. In case the individual failed to compensate the moneylender, seizure of land would doom farmer's future.

2. Question

Match column A with column B

A	B
• Santhal rebellion	• Malabar
• Mappila rebellion	• Dadabhai Naoroji
• Kurichya rebellion	• Rajmahal Hills
• Drain Theory	• Wayanad

Answer

A	B
• Santhal rebellion	• Rajmahal Hills
• Mappila rebellion	• Malabar
• Kurichya rebellion	• Wayanad
• Drain Theory	• Dadabhai Naoroji

Explanation:

- Santhal was a tribal group which occupied the valley regions of Rajmahal hills in Bihar, Jharkhand and Bengal. They led a revolt against capturing of their land and subsequent enslavement.
- Mappila peasants revolted against the tyrannies of their landlords, who frequently evicted tenants from their lands. They occupied the Malabar hills of Kerala
- Kurichya rebellion was led by the Kurichya and Kurumba tribes of Wayanad in Kerala
- Drain Theory was an economic theory postulated by Dadabhai Naoroji to explain the backwardness of India under colonial rule.

3. Question

What were the circumstances that led to the commercialization of agriculture during the British period?

Answer

Commercialisation of agriculture refers to the shift from cultivation of food crops to that of cash crops in India. This shift was a direct cause of British invasion and rule over India:

- Under the permanent settlement system of land revenue collection during British rule, the farmers were denied ownership of their land. Instead they were tenants who cultivated the land owned by Zamindars.
- In return of cultivable land, the tenants were forced to pay taxes, as high as 60 per cent of their produce. These taxes had to be paid in cash, and that too before the harvest of the crop
- Consequently, the farmer had to borrow money at high interest rates from the moneylenders, and give this money as tax. The money was borrowed against mortgaged property.
- In order to maximise his profits, hence, the farmers in India turned towards cultivating crops that fetched higher prices in market. A common variety of such crops were cash crops required in Britain like indigo, cotton, tea, sugarcane etc.
- Hence, more farmers diverted land away from food crops and into cash crops that was required by the European market, breaking down the erstwhile system of food sufficiency of the villages.

4. Question

Analyze the causes of the Indigo Revolt

Answer

Indigo revolt is seen as the boldest and the most significant agrarian revolt in the history of the country. This was caused by the following factors:

1. The farmers in India had been forced to divert fertile fertile land out of food crops and into indigo cultivation. They were asked to accept high amounts of money as advances for the cultivation of indigo
2. However, at the time of harvest, the British officials would interfere with the market, and consequently, the price of indigo would drop steeply. This would lead to poor earnings for the farmers.
3. While the farmers were tolerant of this tyranny, the British delivered another blow. As a consequence of discovery of artificial dyes, they no longer required indigo. So they stopped purchasing indigo altogether.
4. The land used for cultivation of indigo was left useless for the cultivation of any other crops. This led to aggravation of the crises.
5. Hence, the farmers in Bengal came together to protest the tyrannies of a self-meaning government. They attacked cloth factories and offices. Even educated employees from Calcutta flooded the villages to support the farmers, forcing the British to stop indigo cultivation in India.

5. Question

'Kurichya rebellion was a resistance by the tribes against the British exploitation'. What were the circumstances that led to the Kurichya rebellion?

Answer

Kurichya rebellion was led by the Kurichya and Kurumba tribes of the Wayanad region of Kerala. It was a tribal insurgency against the British and was led by Rama Nambi. The causes of the revolt were:

1. Imposition of heavy taxes by the British: The taxes were imposed on whatever goods the tribal communities produced, collected or gathered from the forest.
2. Compulsion for paying the tax in cash: the tribal communities had to cover their dues in cash, and kind (berries, fruits, wood etc.) were not accepted.
3. Seizing of agricultural land for non-payment of taxes, which was seen as absurd, considering that the communities had farmed on these lands for ages and generations.

6. Question

What were the causes of the decline of the Indian textile industry?

Answer

During the British rule, the output from Indian textile industry deteriorated and industrial towns decimated because of the following reasons:

1. The British flooded the Indian market with machine made textiles from their motherland. The fabric was cheap, affordable and readily available. This was the single largest reason for decline of our textile industry.
2. The expansion of Indian Railways was also a cause for decline of Indian textiles. The railways were used to move the imported fabric from port towns to inner cities, where they competed with Indian produced cloth.
3. The British increased the taxes on import of India cloth into Britain. Hence, India's exports also fell dramatically
4. The British also actively exported Indian cotton to the mills outside India. So, the India textile industry had competed with them for raw materials as well.
5. Crippled by foreign competition in local markets and lack of exports due to high taxes, the weavers abandoned the mills and textile cities such as Murshidabad and Dhaka decimated

7. Question

Do you think that the famines in India were the creation of the British? Why?

Answer

Yes, the famines in Indian were a creation of British hands as these were caused by massive decline in the productivity of agriculture and handicraft sectors. Both these sectors had suffered because of British policies.

AGRICULTURE

The British ruined Indian agriculture through:

1. Permanent Settlement system, which raised taxes and demanded the taxes be paid in cash. This led to

vicious cycles of borrowing from money lenders, which ultimately made the farmers worse-off

2. Diverting land from food crops to cash crops to supply the British industries.

3. Forcing farmers to cultivate indigo on their land and manipulating markets to lower the purchasing price of indigo.

HANDICRAFTS

The Indian handicrafts industry received massive blows because of:

1. Massive imports of cheap, England produced cloth into Indian market. Made on mechanised mills, it was of finer quality and lower price.

2. Extension of the Railways which made it easier to carry imported goods to the cities and raw materials to the ports. This made it difficult for the Indian industries to procure raw materials for themselves.

3. Increasing import duties on Indian goods into British markets, which reduced the export demands of our goods.

8. Question

Evaluate the role of Drain Theory by Dadabhai Naoroji in stimulating national feeling among the Indian masses.

Answer

Dadabhai Naoroji, a distinguished Indian economist, put forward his DRAIN THEORY, wherein he talked about the drain of wealth from India, into England. He said that India was poor and starving because India's wealth was being sucked into Britain by factors like:

1. Export of India raw materials such as cotton, sugarcane, tea etc. to Britain to fuel their industries

2. Massive amounts of salaries and pensions given to British officers in India, which was sent home

3. Profit gained by selling British produced goods in Indian markets.

4. Taxes collected from Indians.

This theory stimulated nationalist fervour and an anti-British attitude among various sections of the societies. They could see how Britain was forcing its control on Indian produce and markets, and trying to make India a production ground of raw materials. This was seen as negative, and led to the sentiment of ECONOMIC NATIONALISM.

9. Question

Analyzes the causes of the Revolt of 1857

Answer

The revolt of 1857, also called the First War of Indian Independence, was caused by several immediate and persistent factors:

MISERIES OF THE SEPOYS

1. The Indian soldiers under British recruitment had faced poor salaries and massive abuse at the hands of British officers.

2. The British tried to hurt the religious sentiments of Indian soldiers, as the new cartridges given to these officers were lined with the fat of cow and pigs. The soldiers who refused to use these cartridges were punished by the British

3. Mangal Pandey, who refused to use these new cartridges, was abused and ultimately hanged to death, for his denials.

DISSATISFACTION OF THE KINGS

The kings had faced the wrath of the British in the form of Doctrine of Lapse. Several Indian kingdoms were eyeing annexation by the British due to the lack of a male heir. Hence, kings and queens from Jhansi, Gwalior and Meerut also joined the sepoy mutiny.

MISERIES OF FARMERS

Most Indian sepoys had farming backgrounds, and were painfully aware of agrarian crises and land revenue systems that crippled the Indian farmer and caused him to end his own life, the indigo plantations, high taxes, permanent settlement and other policies of the British forced farmers to take to arms.

POVERTY OF THE CRAFTSMEN

Not only the sepoys and rulers, but common people like craftsmen and Indian bankers also joined the revolt. They were supposed to pay high taxes, and in the midst of falling business and decreasing quality of life, they felt ill-at-ease with the British rule.

10. Question

What were the sources of economic drain from India to Britain?

Answer

According to Dadabhai Naroji, Indian wealth drained into the English coffers through the following sources:

1. Massive export of Indian farm produce: The Indian farmers diverted huge portions of land away from food crops and towards commercially important crops like cotton and tea. These were then exported to Britain to fuel the industries in the continent, as agriculture had substantially declined in post-Industrial Revolution Britain.
2. The British troops and officers deployed in India drew heavy salaries from the Indian cash reserves, and sent this money to their homes in Europe.
3. Britain produced goods were flooded into Indian markets, and being cheaper than their Indian counterparts, they generated massive profits.
4. Heavy taxes imposed on the public were also sent back to Britain and were not invested in the development or upliftment of the people.

11. Question

Do you think that the Swadeshi Movement was a mass movement? Why?

Answer

To reduce the drain of Indian wealth, the Bengali scholars advocated that the citizens should boycott foreign goods and use only Indian goods and services. We know that this was a mass movement because:

1. Foreign goods were collected and burnt publicly, and several such bonfires were reported in the city during those days.
2. The years after 1905 saw the rise and rejuvenation of Indian industries and home-made textiles, soaps, matchboxes and insurances entered the market again.
3. It also saw the rise of Indian banks and large industry like Tata Iron and Steel Plant and Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company, which were signs of a healthy economy.
4. Numbers also show that foreign imports went down drastically in this period.
5. Women, labourers and priests participated en-masse. Notably, washer men refused to wash foreign cloth and women threw away foreign bangles and goods.

The organised nature of Swadeshi movement and economic crippling of the British were significant forces in Indian nationalism that ultimately led to freedom from foreign rule.

Extended Activities

1. Question

Collect news and pictures on peasant and tribal rebellions that took place in different parts of India during the British rule and prepare an album.



Answer



2. Question

Prepare a magazine featuring the centres and leaders of the First War of Indian Independence in 1857.

Answer

S.No.	Name of the centre	Name of the leader	Picture
1.	Barrackpore	Mangal Pandey	 A postage stamp from India featuring a portrait of Mangal Pandey. The stamp is orange and white, with the text 'MANGAL PANDEY' and '50' visible.
2.	Delhi	Bahadur Shah II	 A portrait of Bahadur Shah II, a Mughal emperor, wearing a green turban and a red robe, set within an oval frame.
3.	Jhansi	Rani Laxmibai	 A portrait of Rani Laxmibai, a Marathi warrior queen, wearing a red sari and holding a sword.
4.	Kanpur	Nana Sahib	 A black and white portrait of Nana Sahib, a Marathi leader, wearing a turban and a patterned shawl.
5.	Lucknow	Begum Hazrat Mahal	 A portrait of Begum Hazrat Mahal, a Marathi leader, wearing a green sari and a large earring.