

Q No. 1:- Match the following.

Answer.

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|---------|-----------------------------------|
| • ryot | village |
| • mahal | peasant |
| • nij | cultivation on ryot's lands |
| • ryoti | cultivation on planter's own land |

Q No. 2:- Fill in the blanks:

Answer.

- (a) Growers of woad in Europe saw **indigo** as a crop which would provide competition to their earnings.
- (b) The demand for indigo increased in the late-eighteenth-century Britain because of the **expansion of cotton production as a result of industrialisation, which in turn created an enormous demand for cloth dyes.**
- (c) The international demand for indigo was affected by the discovery of **synthetic dyes.**
- (d) The Champaran movement was against **the indigo planters.**

Q No. 3:- Describe the main features of the Permanent Settlement.

Answers. In order to get a stable revenue income, most of the East India Company's officials believed that investment in land had to be encouraged and agriculture had to be improved. Debates on how this was to be done led to the introduction of the Permanent Settlement in 1793. The aim of this settlement was to ensure a regular flow of revenue for the Company. As per the settlement, rajas and taluqdars were recognised as zamindars. They were asked to collect rent from the peasants and pay revenue to the Company. The amount to be paid was fixed permanently and it was not to be increased ever in the future. The Company believed that as the revenue amount was fixed, the zamindars would benefit by investing in land improvement, which would in turn lead to increased production. If the zamindars failed to pay the revenue, which they usually did as the fixed revenue was very high, they lost their zamindari.

Q No. 4:- How was the mahalwari system different from the Permanent Settlement?

Answer:-

Q5 Give two problems which arose with the new Munro system of fixing revenue.

Answer. Under the new Munro system of fixing revenue, the revenue officials fixed too high a revenue demand. This demand could not be met by the peasants. Consequently, the peasants fled the countryside and villages became deserted in many regions.

Q No. 6:- Why were ryots reluctant to grow indigo?

Answer. Under the ryoti system, the indigo planters forced the ryots to sign an agreement or contract. At times, the village headmen signed the contract on behalf of the ryots. Those who signed the contract got cash advances at low rates of interest to produce indigo. The loan committed the ryot to cultivate indigo on at least 25 per cent of the area under his holding. On delivering the crop to the planter, the ryot was given a new loan, and the cycle started again. The peasants realised that this system of growing indigo was in fact oppressive. The price that they got from the planters for the indigo was very low. The loans, though tempting at first, were part of a vicious cycle from which they could not escape. The planters insisted that the peasants cultivate indigo on the most fertile parts of their land, but the peasants preferred growing rice on the best soils. The reason for not wanting to grow indigo was that indigo, with its deep roots, exhausted the soil rapidly. So, after an indigo harvest, the land could not be used for sowing rice.

Q No. 7:- What were the circumstances which led to the eventual collapse of indigo production in Bengal?

Answer. The indigo ryots of Bengal felt they had the support of local zamindars and village headmen in their struggle against the forceful and oppressive methods of the indigo planters. They also believed the British government would support them in their struggle. The Lieutenant Governor's tour of the region in 1859 was seen as a sign of government sympathy while the magistrate's notice stating that ryots would not be compelled to accept indigo contracts was seen as the declaration by Queen Victoria herself. Many intellectuals too supported the ryots by writing about their misery, the tyranny of the planters, and the horror of the system. In March 1859, thousands of ryots refused to grow indigo. Worried by the rebellion, the government set up the Indigo Commission to inquire into the system of indigo production. The Commission held the planters guilty, and criticised them for their coercive methods. It declared that indigo cultivation was not profitable for ryots, and that after fulfilling their existing contracts, they could refuse to produce indigo in future. Consequently, indigo production collapsed in Bengal.

Q8 Find out more about the Champaran movement and Mahatma Gandhi's role in it.

Answer. When the indigo production collapsed in Bengal (after the Revolt or Great Rebellion of 1857), the European planters (of indigo) shifted their operations to Bihar. With the discovery of synthetic dyes in the late nineteenth century their business was severely affected, but yet they managed to expand production. When Mahatma Gandhi returned from South Africa, a peasant from Bihar persuaded him to visit Champaran and see the plight of the indigo cultivators there. **Role of Mahatma Gandhi:** Mahatma Gandhi's visit in 1917 marked the beginning of the Champaran movement against the indigo planters. The European planters oppressed the peasants and forced them to grow indigo and sell their product at cheaper rate, Gandhiji reached Champaran in 1917 to witness the miserable conditions of the peasants. The District Officials ordered him to leave Champaran but he refused to comply the orders and started the Satyagraha.

It was victory for Gandhiji. A commission was appointed to examine the activities of the plantation owners in which Gandhiji was also kept as a member.

Q9 Look into the history of either tea or coffee plantations in India. See how the life of workers in these plantations was similar to or different from that of workers in indigo plantations.

Answer. (i) Accounts of earlier Indian history do not mention the use of tea or its cultivation. We get a mention by a Dutch sea-traveller in 1598 that tea is being eaten as well as drunk in India.

(ii) In 1824, tea plants were discovered in the hills of the Indian state of Assam. The British introduced tea culture into India in 1836. India had been the top producer of tea for nearly a century.

(iii) The workers in the tea plantations were oppressed. They were given low wages. There were poor housing and lack of social mobility. For making more profits, the tea planters reclaimed wastelands where the workers had to labour hard to develop plantation. For this, the planters introduced indentured labour system. The local as well as outside labourers were employed under contract. There were two types of indentured labour system-Arkatti and Sardari.

(iv) Under Arkatti system, unlicensed recruitment was carried from Chotanagpur and other tribal areas of the sub-continent. Under the Sardari system new labourers were employed by those who were already employed in the plantation gardens.

(v) The labourers had to work hard. The outside labourers had to stay at the garden for a longer period. They were not permitted to meet their family, even on occasions. They were exploited in many ways. They were not allowed to leave the plantation garden during the contract period.

(vi) The labourers in the tea plantations and indigo farming were similar in the way that they were exploited heavily. The profit was made by the owners and the labourers got almost nothing. They were different in the way that, however, there was a contract with the planters, but indigo workers were not under indentured labour system.
