

History

Lesson -3-Rural life and Society

A. Answer the questions given by choosing the most appropriate alternative from those given below.

1. c. Permanent settlement
2. b. 1820
3. c. Indigo
4. d. Five
5. d. 50 per cent

B. Match the following.

- 1 - c. First peasant revolt by Indian farmers.
- 2 - d. Annexation of Punjab by the British.
- 3 - a. Large pieces of land owned by Europeans.
- 4 - e. Crops which can easily be sold in the market.
- 5 - b. Owners of the land who collected taxes.

C. Answer the questions in about 50- 70 words.

1. The ijaradars were the highest bidders who had the right to collect revenue on behalf of the British for a period of five years. The bidders were called contractors.

2. The first land revenue settlement was the permanent settlement which was introduced in Bihar, Bengal and Orissa in 1793. In 1820, the Ryotwari settlement was introduced in the Madras presidency, and later extended to the Bombay presidency as well. The third exploitative land revenue policy was the Mahalwari settlement which was introduced in western Uttar Pradesh, parts of Madhya Pradesh and Punjab.



3. Commercial crops that can be easily bought and sold on the market are called cash crops. Indigo and tea were two cash crops grown in British plantations in India.

4. Under the Mahalwari settlement, the land revenue settlement was made for the entire estate or mahal. The talukdar or the head of the village had to collect the revenue from the villages and hand it over to the company. The rate of revenue was roughly half of the total agricultural produce, which was subject to a periodic revision. This system was introduced by the British in western Uttar Pradesh, parts of Madhya Pradesh and Punjab.

5. The planters had to shut down their workshops and the British banned forcible indigo cultivation. The revolt proved that when the peasants were tortured, they would eventually resist tyranny. It also generated awareness among the Indian agrarian classes about their rights. Finally, the malevolent nature of the British rule was exposed to the outside world, when the news spread of the British colonial power's merciless handling of peasants.

D. Answer the questions in about 80- 100 words.

1. One feature was that zamindars obtained hereditary rights over land, whereas farmers were merely tenants. The Zamindars became loyalists to the company, and would extract exorbitant rates from the cultivators. On the other hand, neither the British nor the landlords took any interest in improving agricultural methods. The other feature that had a devastating impact on Peasants was that the Zamindars had to pay a fixed amount of land revenue even if the crop failed, else their land was auctioned off. This meant the peasants were forced to borrow money and mortgage their land to pay rent when crops failed.

2. In the Ryotwari settlement, the peasants or ryots were considered owners of the land and revenue was collected directly from them. However, in the Mahalwari settlement, the talukdar or head of the village had to collect the revenue from the villages which were collectively considered to be the estate or mahal. The rate of revenue for both was roughly half of the total agricultural produce, but in the Ryotwari system, the rate was settled for a period of 30 years after which it could be revised, whereas in the Mahalwari system, the rate of revenue was periodically revised.



3. Permanent settlement benefitted the British as they were assured of regular income even when crops failed, and their income increased overall. The new landlords became loyalists and were used for consolidating political authority . Indian farmers suffered at the hands of zamindars , who charged exorbitant rates. Since the peasants had to pay even when the crops failed, they were forced to borrow from moneylenders at high interest . In case of non - repayment , their land was mortgaged and often lost. They were forced to cultivate cash crops in order to gain maximum revenue , instead of rice or wheat. This caused a famine-like situation.

4. The British required a regular supply of indigo for its textile factories. The indigo planters gave loans to the cultivators for cultivating crops, which they had to sell to various factories at low prices. Later, the planters informed the peasants that loans could be repaid only by supplying indigo to them at fixed rates, not by any other means . Violation of this, evoked large-scale oppressive measures such as holding the cultivator and his family as prisoners, burning his house , etc . This inhuman oppression of indigo cultivators forced them to revolt in Bihar and Bengal against the indigo planters, zamindars and moneylenders.

5. The British land revenue policies were detrimental to Indians and caused widespread suffering . Cultivators suffered oppression from landlords, village headmen or contractors . Often they ended up taking loans or mortgaging their land to merciless moneylenders , losing their land and sometimes having to work as bonded labourers (Begari) or to migrate to cities . The agrarian social framework was damaged and the self- sufficiency of villages was destroyed. With the increase in cash crops, whenever there was drought , there would be a famine- like situation , Land productivity fell and methods of agriculture stagnated as the British did not provide irrigation facilities seeds, ploughs or fertilizers, nor did they try to educate the farmers.

