

CHAPTER – 3
RULING THE COUNTRYSIDE
LET'S RECALL

Question 1: Match the following:

(i) Ryot	Village
(ii) Mahal	Present
(iii) Nij	Cultivation on ryot's land
(iv) Ryoti	Cultivation on Planter's own land

Answer:

(i) Ryot	Present
(ii) Mahal	Village
(iii) Nij	Cultivation on Planter's own land
(iv) Ryoti	Cultivation on ryot's land

Question 2: Fill in the blanks:

- (a) Growers of woad in Europe saw _____ as a crop which would provide competition to their earnings.
- (b) The demand for indigo increased in late eighteenth century because of _____
- (c) The international demand for indigo was effected by the discovery of _____
- (d) The Champaran Movement was against _____

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 late eighteenth century because of **industrial revolution**
- (c) The international demand for indigo was effected by the discovery of **woad**
- (d) The Champaran Movement was against **indigo planters**

LET'S DISCUSS

Question 3: Describe the main features of the Permanent Settlement.

Answer:

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. This led to the introduction of Permanent settlement in 1793. The aim of the settlement was to ensure a regular flow of revenue for the company.

The main features of the Permanent Settlement were:

- (i) The rajas and taluqdars were recognized as zamindars. The Company set a fixed amount to pay for the peasant and these Zamindars were asked to collect rent from the peasants and pay revenue to the Company.
- (ii) It encouraged the zamindars to invest in improving the land.
- (iii) Since the revenue demand of the state would not be increased, the zamindar would benefit from increased production from the land.
- (iv) If any of them failed to fulfill these conditions, he was ousted from his land and his zamindari was put to auction.

Question 4: How was the Mahalwari system different from the Permanent Settlement?

Answer:

Permanent Settlement	Mahalwari System
(i) Permanent settlement was introduced in Bihar and Bengal	(i) The system of Mahalwari was introduced in western part of Gangetic Valley, North –West Province, Part of Central India and Punjab.
(ii) It was introduced in 1793 by Lord Cornwallis.	(II) It came into effect in 1822 and was devised by Holt Mackenzie.
(iii) It was aimed to ensure a permanent amount of revenue for the company.	(III) It was developed as the alternative to the Permanent Settlement.
(iv) The amount to be paid as land revenue was fixed. The government could not enhance the land revenue.	(IV) The amount of land revenue was revised periodically. The government could revise the revenue.
(v) The zamindar had the charge of collecting the revenue.	(V) The charge of collecting the revenue and paying it to the Company was given to the village headman.

Question 5: Give two problems which arose with the new Munro system of fixing revenue.

Answer:

Munro system was a move away from the idea of the permanent settlement. In the south, there were no traditional Zamindars, therefore the settlement had to be made directly with the cultivators. The lands were carefully surveyed before setting the fixed revenue.

The problems created by the Munro system in fixing revenues were:

(i) Driven by the desire to increase the income from land, revenue officials (Captain Alexander Read and Thomas Munro) fixed too high a revenue demand. Peasants were unable to pay, ryots fled the countryside.

(ii) Optimistic officials had imagined that the new system would transform the peasants into rich enterprising farmers. But this did not happen instead villages became deserted in several areas.

Question 6: Why were ryots reluctant to grow indigo?

Answer:

The villagers who signed the contract to grow indigo got cash in advance at low rates of interest to produce it. According to this contract, the ryots had to cultivate indigo on at least 25% of their holding area. When they delivered the crop to the planter a new loan was given to ryots and cycle started again.

Ryots were reluctant to grow indigo because:

- (a) The indigo system was intensely oppressive.
- (b) Peasants who were initially tempted by the loans soon realized how harsh the system was. The price they got for the indigo they produced was very low and the cycle of loans never ended.
- (c) The planters usually insisted that indigo be cultivated on the best soils in which peasants preferred to cultivate rice.
- (d) Indigo had deep roots and it exhausted the soil rapidly. After an indigo harvest, the land could not be sown with rice.

Question 7: What were the circumstances which led to the eventual collapse of Indigo production in Bengal?

Answer:

The indigo ryots of Bengal felt that they had the support of local Zamidars 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.

- (i) In March 1859, thousands of ryots in Bengal refused to grow indigo. As the rebellion spread, ryots refused to pay rents to the planter and attacked indigo factories armed with swords and spears, bows and arrows.
- (ii) Ryots swore they would no longer take advances to sow indigo nor be bullied by planter's lathiyals.
- (iii) The government set-up the Indigo Commission to enquire into the system of indigo production. The Commission held the planters guilty and criticized them for the coercive methods they used with indigo cultivators.
- (iv) The Indigo Commission declared that indigo production was not profitable for ryots. The Commission asked the ryots to fulfill their existing contracts but also told them that they could refuse to produce indigo in future.

LET'S DO

Question 8: Find out more about the Champaran Movement and Mahatma Gandhi's role in it.

Answer:

When the indigo production collapsed in Bengal, the European planters of indigo shifted their operations to Bihar. The farmers of Champaran, a village in Bihar, were forced to grow indigo by the European planters instead of the food crops which were necessary for their survival. The indigo planters were destroying the productivity of the land which was the main reason for the protest. 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 planter.
- The European planter oppressed the peasants. Gandhiji witnessed the miserable conditions of the peasants.
- He started a non-violent and a peaceful movement.
- The districts officials ordered him to leave Champaran but he refused to comply the orders and started the Satyagraha.