

CLASS VIII CH 3 RULING THE COUNTRYSIDE (NCERT)

EXERCISES

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Question 1: Match the following:

A	B
1. Ryot	a) Village
2. Mahal	b) Peasant
3. Nij	c) Cultivation on ryot's lands
4. Ryoti	d) Cultivation on planter's own land

Answers:

1. Peasants
2. Mahal
3. Cultivation on
planters own
land
4. Cultivation on
ryots land

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Question 2: Fill in the blanks:

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(a) Growers of woad in Europe saw _____ as a crop which would provide competition to their earnings.

(b) The demand for indigo increased in the late-eighteenth-century Britain because of _____ .

(c) The international demand for indigo was affected by the discovery of _____ .

(d) The Champaran movement was against _____.

Answers:

1. Indigo
2. Industrialisation
3. Synthetic dyes
4. The indigo planters

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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

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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 recognized 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.

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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.

Question 4:

How was the mahalwari system different from the Permanent Settlement.

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Answer:

Mahalwari Settlement

(i) The mahalwari system, devised by Holt Mackenzie, came into effect in 1822, in the North Western provinces of the Bengal Presidency.

(ii) It was devised as an alternative to the Permanent Settlement.

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(iii) The village headmen were in charge of collecting revenue.

(iv) The revenue amount was not fixed, and was to be revised periodically. The estimated revenue of each plot within a village was added up to calculate the revenue that each village or mahal had to pay.

Permanent Settlement

(i) The Permanent Settlement was introduced in 1793 by Lord Cornwallis.

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(ii) It was aimed at ensuring stable revenue for the East India Company.

(iii) The rajas and taluqdars were in charge of collecting revenue.

(iv) The revenue amount was fixed and was never to be increased in the future.

Question 5:

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

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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.

Question 6:

Why were ryots reluctant to grow indigo?

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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.

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The peasants realized that this system of growing indigo was in fact quite 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,

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after an indigo harvest, the land could not be used for sowing 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 they had the support of local zamidars and village headmen in,

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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,

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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 criticized 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.