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Class 9 History Notes

Peasants and Farmers



Key Notes and Important Questions with Answers

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CHAPTER - 6
PEASANTS AND FARMERS

POINTS TO REMEMBER:

- On the night of 28 August 1830, a threshing machine of a farmer was destroyed by labourers in East Kent in England. In the subsequent two years, riots spread over southern England and about 387 threshing machines were broken. Alarmed landlords feared attacks by armed bands at night, and many destroyed their own machines.
- Before this time in large parts of England the **countryside was open**.
    I. It was not partitioned into enclosed lands privately owned by landlords.
    II. Peasants cultivated on strips of land around the village they lived in.
    III. At the beginning of each year, at a public meeting, each villager was allocated a number of strips to cultivate.
    IV. All villagers had access to the commons.
    V. Here they pastured their cows and grazed their sheep,
    VI. Collected fuel wood for fire
    VII. Berries and fruit for food. They fished in the rivers and ponds, and hunted rabbit in common forests. For the poor, the common land was essential for survival.
- **Causes of enclosure movement:**
    A. Rising Wool Prices
    I. When the price of wool went up in the world market in the sixteenth century, rich farmers wanted to expand wool production to earn profits.
    II. They were eager to improve their sheep breeds and ensure good feed for them.
    III. They were keen on controlling large areas of land in compact blocks to allow improved breeding.
    IV. So they began dividing and enclosing common land and building hedges around their holdings to separate their property from that of others.

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B. Anglo- French war

I. By the end of the eighteenth century, France was at war with England.
II. **Prices of food grains** in England sky rocketed, encouraging landowners to enclose lands and enlarge the area under grain cultivation.
III. Fearing a **shortage of labour** they began buying the new threshing machines that had come into the market.

- In 1660s, farmers in many parts of England began growing turnip and clover because these crops improved the fertility of soil.
- In the nineteenth century, **Grain production grew as quickly** as population in England.
    I. This increase in food-grain production was made possible not by any radical innovations in agricultural technology, but by bringing new lands under cultivation.
    II. Landlords sliced up pasturelands, carved up open fields, cut up forest commons, took over marshes, and turned larger and larger areas into agricultural fields.
    III. When fences came up, the enclosed land became the exclusive property of one landowner.
- **Cause of Captain Swing riots**-
    I. Earlier, it was common for labourers to live with landowners. They ate at the master's table, and helped their master through the year, doing a variety of odd jobs.
    II. For the poor the threshing machines had become a sign of bad times.
    III. The unemployed poor tramped from village to village,
    IV. Those with uncertain jobs lived in fear of a loss of their livelihood.
    V. Therefore, **The Captain Swing riots** spread in the countryside at this time.
- Many of Native American groups lived only by hunting, gathering and fishing; others cultivatings, beans, tobacco and pumpkin.
- By the early twentieth century, White Americans had moved westward and established control up to the west coast, displacing local tribes and carving out the entire landscape into different agricultural belts. The USA had come to dominate the world market in agricultural produce.

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- In the decades after 1800 the US government committed itself to a policy of driving the American Indians westward, first beyond the river Mississippi, and then further west.
- First decade of the eighteenth century, **settlers** moved into the Mississippi valley between 1820 and 1850.
    I. They slashed and burnt forests, pulled out the stumps,
    II. cleared the land for cultivation, and
    III. built log cabins in the forest clearings.
    IV. Then they cleared larger areas, and erected fences around the fields.
    V. They ploughed the land and sowed corn and wheat.
- Expansion of wheat producing belt in USA
    I. Using new technology,
    II. With increased demand, wheat prices rose, encouraging farmers to produce wheat.
    III. The spread of the railways made it easy to transport the grain from the wheat-growing regions to the eastern coast for export.
    IV. Russian supplies of wheat were cut off and the USA had to feed Europe. US President Wilson called upon farmers to respond to the need of the time. **'Plant more wheat, wheat will win the war',** he said.
- By the early twentieth century, farmers in the Great Plains were breaking the groundwith tractors and disk ploughs, clearing vast stretches for wheat cultivation.
- In1831, **Cyrus McCormick invented the first mechanical reaper** which could cut in one day as much as five men could cut with cradles and 16 men with sickles. So, most farmers were using combined harvesters to cut grain.
- The new machines allowed these big farmers to rapidly clear large tracts, break up the soil, remove the grass and prepare the ground for cultivation.
- **For the poorer farmers, machines brought misery.**
    I. Many of them bought these machines, imagining that wheat prices would remain high and profits would flow in.
    II. If they had no money, the banks offered loans.
    III. Those who borrowed found it difficult to pay back their debts.

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IV. Many of them deserted their farms and looked for jobs elsewhere.
V. But jobs were difficult to find because Mechanisation had reduced the need for labour.

- Production had expanded so rapidly during the war and post-war years that there was a large surplus. Unsold stocks piled up, storehouses overflowed with grain, and vast amounts of corn and wheat were turned into animal feed. Wheat prices fell and export markets collapsed.
- In the 1930s, terrifying duststorms began to blow over the southern plains. as the skies darkened, and the dust swept in, people were blinded and choked. Cattle were suffocated to death, their lungs caked with dust and mud. Sand buried fences, covered fields, and coated the surfaces of rivers till the fish died.
- Tractors and machines that had ploughed the earth and harvested the wheat in the 1920s were now clogged with dust, damaged beyond repair.
- **Reason of these duststorms** are –
    I. The rains failed year after year, and temperatures soared.
    II. The wind blew with ferocious speed.
    III. But ordinary duststorms became black blizzards only because the entire landscape had been ploughed over, stripped of all grass that held it together.
- British rule was gradually established in India after the **Battle of Plassey (1757).** To build the resources of the state, efforts were made to impose a regular system of land revenue, increase revenue rates, and expand the area under cultivation.
- In the **colonial period**, rural India also came to produce a range of crops for the world market. In the early nineteenth century**, indigo and opium** were two of the major commercial crops.
    I. By the end of the century, peasants were producing sugarcane, cotton, jute, wheat and several other crops for export,
    II. to feed the population of urban Europe
    III. to supply the mills of Lancashire and Manchester in England.
- The **history of opium production in India** was linked up with the story of British trade with China.
    I. In the late eighteenth century, the English East India Company was buying tea and silk from China for sale in England.

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II. The Confucian rulers of China, the Manchus, were suspicious of all foreign merchants and were unwilling to allow the entry of foreign goods.

III. The Portuguese had introduced opium into China in the early sixteenth century.

IV. The Chinese were aware of the dangers of opium addiction, so the Emperor had forbidden its production and sale except for medicinal purposes.

V. But western merchants began an illegal trade in opium.

VI. While the English cultivated a taste for Chinese tea, the Chinese became addicted to opium.

VII. People of all classes took to the drug – shopkeepers and peddlers, officials and army men, aristocrats and paupers.

VIII. When the British conquered Bengal, they made a determined effort to produce opium in the lands under their control.

- Indians were unwilling to turn their fields over to poppy. Because –
  I. the poppy crop had to be grown on the best land, but On this land peasants usually produced pulses, many cultivators owned no land ,
  II. the cultivation of opium was a difficult process,
  III. the government payment to the cultivators for the opium was very low
  IV. By taking the loan, the cultivator was forced to grow opium on a specified area of land and hand over the produce to the agents once the crop had been harvested.
  V. He had no option of planting the field with a crop of his choice or of selling his produce to anyone but the government agent. And he had to accept the low price offered for the produce.
  VI. The prices given to the peasants were so low that by the early eighteenth century angry peasants began agitating for higher prices and refused to take advances.
  VII. In regions around Benaras, cultivators began giving up opium cultivation. They produced sugarcane and potatoes instead.
  VIII. Many cultivators sold off their crop to travelling traders (pykars) who offered higher prices.
- By 1773, the British government in Bengal had established a monopoly to trade in opium.

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- It was a story of displacements and impoverishment, ecological crises and social rebellion, colonisation and repression.

QUESTIONS

Very Short Answer Type Questions(1 Marks each)

1. What is Bushel?
2. What is Shillings?
3. How many countries were involved in triangular trade?
4. Which country have become opium addicts?
5. Write the name of new two crops that were introduced by farmers in England to retain fertility of the soil.
6. What do you mean by agriculture depression?
7. Who introduced opium in china?
8. What is threshing machine?
9. Who said 'Plant more wheat, wheat will win the war'?
10. Name of the parts of India in which opium produced?
11. What is triangular trade?
12. Which were two major commercial crops grown in India in early 19^{th} century?
13. Who was captain swing?

Short/Long Answer Type Questions(3/5 Marks)

1. Discuss the reasons for starting the enclosure movement in England.
2. What was the Dust Bowl tragedy?
3. Why were Indian was unwilling to turn their fields over to poppy
4. Why did rich farmers invest in the threshing machine?
5. Analyze the life of various Native American groups during last decade of 18^{th} century.
6. Mention the main factors supported in creating new demands for grain in England.
7. How did British make the Chinese addicted to opium?

Answers

Very Short Answer Type Questions(1 Marks each)

1. A measure of capacity
2. An English currency. 20 shillings = £1(1 pound)

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3. Britain, India, China
4. China
5. Clover and turnip
6. The production of food grain is high but demand is less.
7. Portuguese
8. A machine for separating the grain from corn.
9. USA President Wilson
10. Central India and Rajasthan
11. The British traders took opium from India to China and tea from China to England. Between India and England trade flowed both ways.
12. Indigo and opium
13. A mythic name used by poor labourer to threaten the rich landlords

Short/Long Answer Type Questions(3/5 Marks)

1. a. when the price of wool went up , rich farmers wanted to expand wool production for profit.
   b. to improve wool production by improving sheep breeds
   c. Controlling large areas of land to allow improved breeding.

2. a. The expansion of wheat agriculture in great plains in USA created other problems.
   b. In 1930 terrifying dust storm of 7000 to 8000 feet high began to below.
   c. These rises like monstrous wave of muddy walls which blinded and choked people, suffocated cattles to death & covered field with dead body of birds and animals.

3. a. the crop had to be grown on the best land
   b. many cultivators owned no land.
   c. They had to pay rent and lease land from landlords.
   d. the rent charged on good lands near villages was very high.
   e. the cultivation of opium was a difficult process.
   f. the government paid to the cultivators for the opium was very low.

4. a. shortage of labour
   b. labour was insolent, lazy and prone drinking

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c. reduce dependency on labour
d. increase efficiency and production

5. a. some groups were nomadic and some were settled
   b. Many of native American groups lived only by hunting, gathering and fishing;
   c. many of them cultivated corn, beans, tobacco and pumpkin.
   d. native American were expert trappers

6. a. expanding population
   b. industrialsation
   c. urbanization
   d. war with France

7. a. it was used for medical purposes
   b. so the Emperor had forbidden its production and sale except for medicinal purposes.
   c. western merchants began an illegal trade in opium.

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