

NCERT SOLUTIONS

CLASS - 12th



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Class : 12th

Subject : History

Chapter : 10

Chapter Name : Colonialism and The Countryside

Q1 Why was the jotedar a powerful figure in many areas of rural Bengal?

Answer. A class of rich peasants of Bengal were known as jotedars. They had acquired vast areas of lands - sometimes as much as several thousand acres. They controlled local trade as well as moneylending and also exercised immense power over poor cultivators of the region.

The jotedars were powerful figure in many areas of rural Bengal because :

- They exercised direct control over a considerable section of poor villagers as they lived in the same village and could easily influence the villagers.
- They fiercely resisted efforts of Zamindars to increase the jama of the village, prevented zamindari official from executing their duties.
- They mobilised ryots who were dependent on them, and deliberately delayed payment of revenue to the zamindars.

Page : 286 , Block Name : Short Answer

Q2 How did zamindars manage to retain control over their zamindaris?

Answer. The zamindars devised ways of surviving the pressure, some of which are :

- They adopted the strategy of Fictitious sale. It involved a series of manoeuvres. The Raja of Burdwan, for instance, first transferred some of his zamindari to his mother, since the company had decreed that the property of women would not be taken over.
- As second move, his agents manipulated the auctions. The revenue demand of the company was deliberately withheld, and unpaid balances were allowed to accumulate.

→ When a part of the estate was auctioned, the Zamindars' men bought the property, outbidding other purchasers. Subsequently they refused to pay up the purchase money, so that the estate had to be resold. Once again the purchase money was not paid, and once again there was an auction. This process was repeated endlessly, exhausting the state, and the other bidders at the auction. At last the estate was sold back to the Zamindar at low price.

Page : 286 , Block Name : Short Answer

Q3 How did the Paharis respond to the coming of outsiders?

Answer. Paharis were the hill folks who lived around Rajmahal hills, subsisting on forest produce and practising shifting cultivation.

They responded to the coming of outsiders in the following ways :

- When the Santhals settled on the peripheries of the Rajmahal hills, the Paharis resisted but were ultimately forced to withdraw deeper into the hills.
- The paharis were restricted from moving down to the lower hills and valleys, they were confined to the dry interior and to the more barren and rocky upper hills. This severely affected their lives.
- They were largely dependent on shifting cultivation but when they got confined to a restricted area their toil started.
- The hunters were also affected as the forests began to be cleared.

Thus, there was a great deal of change in the lives of the Paharis.

Page : 286 , Block Name : Short Answer

Q4 Why did the Santhals rebel against British rule?

Answer. The Santhals began settling around 1780's in Bengal as they were called by the Zamindars to settle there in order to reclaim the land and expand agriculture. The British invited them to settle in the Jangal Mahals.

They rebelled against the British rule because :

- They had found out that the land they had brought under cultivation was slipping away from their hands.
- The state was levying heavy taxes on the land that they had cleared.
- The moneylenders were charging them high rates of interest and used to take over the land when they were not able to pay back the debts.
- The Zamindars were asserting control over the Damin area.

By the 1850s, the Santhals felt that the time had come to rebel against the colonial state, in order to create an ideal world for themselves where they would rule. As a result of which the Santhal Pargana was created by carving out land from the districts of Bhagalpur and Birbhum.

Page : 286 , Block Name : Short Answer

Q5 What explains the anger of the Deccan ryots against the moneylenders?

Answer. The main reasons of anger of the Deccan ryots against the moneylenders were :

- The moneylenders refused to extend the loans to the ryots.
- The ryots had got deeper and were piled into debt and they were dependent on the moneylenders for survival, this made them more furious.
- The moneylenders were violating the customary norms of the countryside.
- There was a customary norm that the interest charged could not be greater than the principal amount, but they violated this norm. In many cases it was found out that the moneylenders charged Rs 2,000 as interest for a loan of Rs 100.
- The moneylenders added the unpaid loan amount to the new loans.
- The moneylenders began to manipulate laws and forge accounts.
- The moneylenders refused to give receipts for the repaid loans and entered fictitious figures in the bonds, bought the harvest at low prices and also took over the peasants' property.

Page : 286 , Block Name : Short Answer

Q6 Why were many zamindaris auctioned after the Permanent Settlement?

Answer. Many zamindaris were auctioned after the permanent Settlement because :

- The revenue demanded was so high that in many places peasants deserted their villages and fled and migrated to new regions. In areas of poor soil and fluctuating rainfall the problem was particularly acute. When rains failed the harvests were poor, peasants found it impossible to pay the revenue. This led the seizure of crops and fine used to be imposed.
- Prices of agricultural products fell sharply and did not recover for a decade and a half. This meant a further decline in peasant's income.
- Revenue could rarely be paid without a loan from a moneylender. But once a loan was taken, the ryot found it difficult to pay it back.
- Debt mounted, and loans remained unpaid, peasants' dependence on moneylenders increased.
- The revenue was invariable, regardless of the harvest. They had to pay punctually.
- The permanent settlement initially limited the power of the Zamindars to collect rent from the ryot and manage his zamindari.
- The company wanted to control and regulate the Zamindars, they subdued their authority and restricted their autonomy. The troops were disbanded, custom duties were abolished, and also their courts were brought under the supervision of a collector appointed by the Company.
- Many a times rent collection became a problem because sometimes there were poor harvests and low prices made payments of the dues difficult. Zamindars could prosecute defaulters but the judicial system was also a long drawn process.

Page : 287 , Block Name : Long Answer

Q7 In what way was the livelihood of paharis different from that of Santhals?

Answer. Paharis lived around Rajmahal hills, subsisting on forest produce and practising shifting cultivation. They cleared patches of forest by cutting bushes and burning the undergrowth. On these patches, enriched by the potash from the ash, the paharis grew a variety of pulses and millets for consumption. They scratched the ground lightly with hoes, cultivated the cleared land

for a few years, then left it fallow so that it could recover its fertility, and moved to a new area. From the forest they collected mahua (a flower) for food, silk cocoons and resin for sale, and wood for charcoal production. The life of the Paharis - as hunters, shifting cultivators, food gatherers, charcoal producers, silkworm rearers - was thus intimately connected to the forest. They lived in hutments within tamarind groves, and rested in the shade of mango trees.

Santhals were pouring into the area, clearing forests, cutting down timber, ploughing land and growing rice and cotton. They had better relations with outsiders including the East India Company. Also, Santhal settlements expanded rapidly.

Page : 287 , Block Name : Long Answer

Q8 How did the American Civil war affect the lives of ryots?

Answer. The American Civil War began in 1860, it greatly affected the lives of ryots :

In 1857 the Cotton Supply Association was founded in Britain, and in 1859 the Manchester Cotton Company was formed. Their objective was to encourage Cotton production in every part of the world suited for its growth. When the American Civil War broke out in 1861, a wave of panic spread through cotton circles in Britain.

In Bombay, cotton merchants visited the cotton districts to assess supplies and encourage cultivation. As cotton prices soared export merchants in Bombay were keen to secure as much cotton as possible to meet the British demand.

These developments had a profound impact on the Deccan countryside. The ryots in the Deccan villages suddenly found access to seemingly limitless credit. They were being given Rs 100 as advance for every acre they planted with cotton. While the American crisis continued, cotton production in Bombay Deccan expanded. Some rich peasants did gain, but for the large majority, cotton expansion meant heavier debt.

The American crisis continued but the cotton production in Bombay Deccan kept on increasing.

The share in land area kept on growing and was doubled in the upcoming years.

By the year 1962, around 90% of the cotton required in Britain was fulfilled by India.

As soon as the civil war ended everything changed, the production of cotton was no longer the same. The export merchant stopped extending the money credit. The demands for Indian cotton fell which in turn affected the operations and production of the cotton.

Page : 287 , Block Name : Long Answer

Q9 What are the problems of using official sources in writing about the history of peasants?

Answer. The problems of using the official sources in writing about the history of peasants are :

→ The sources are official and it reflects the official concerns and the events mentioned there are described as per their perception. Everything mentioned there had been manipulated the way they wanted.

→ The sources presented the data with the interpretation they wanted to those could not be relied upon.

→ They in a very straightforward manner blamed the moneylenders for the peasant anger and main cause of the revolts.

→ Food example, The Deccan Riots Commission produced a report. The commission was asked to judge whether the level of government revenue demand was the cause of the revolt. And after presenting all the evidence, the commission reported that the government demand was not the main cause. It was the moneylenders who were to blame.

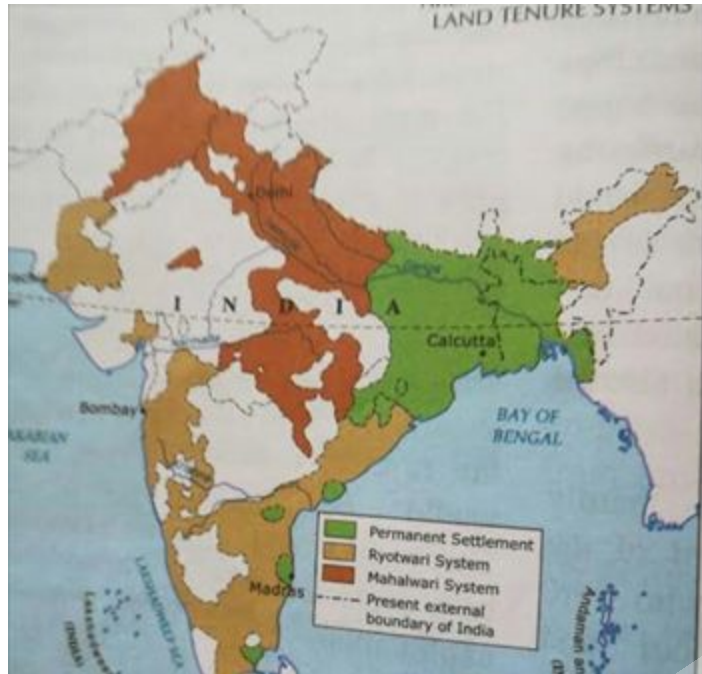
This report, referred to as Deccan Riots Report, provides historians with a range of sources for the riot. The commission held enquiries in the districts where the riots spread, recorded statements of ryots, sahuikars and eyewitnesses, compiled statistical data on revenue rates, prices and interest rates in different regions, and collated the reports sent by district collectors.

Official reports, thus are invaluable sources for the reconstruction of history. But they always have to be read with care and juxtaposed with evidence culled with newspapers, unofficial accounts, legal records and, where possible, oral sources.

Page : 287 , Block Name : Long Answer

Q10 On an outline map of the subcontinent, mark out the areas described in this chapter. Find out whether there were other areas where the Permanent Settlement and the ryotwari system were prevalent and plot these on map as well.

Answer. The areas mentioned in the chapter are : Bengal, Bombay, Madras, Rajmahal hills



Page : 287 , Block Name : Map Work

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