

Q. What were the causes of backwardness of Indian Agriculture?

Ans. The main causes of backwardness of Indian Agriculture were:-

1. The land holdings were divided due to laws of inheritance as a result of growth of population.
2. Encouragement to the zamindari system by the British. Both zamindars and British did nothing to improve agriculture.
3. Indian peasants were unaware of modern techniques of farming, good seeds, fertilizers and irrigation facilities.
4. Indian agriculture mostly depended on monsoons which were uncertain.
5. Poverty and indebtedness of the peasants.

Q. Why did the production of food grains decline?

Ans. The production of food grains declined because of the following reasons:

1. Encouragement of Commercial crops:- The British government encouraged the growth of commercial crops like jute, cotton, indigo etc. which were needed as a raw material by the factories in England. So the production of food grains declined.
2. Lack of modern agricultural techniques:- India peasants neither had improved implements nor better seeds. They were also ignorant of the modern techniques of farming. So the production of food grains declined.
3. Growing pressure on land:- The increasing population had no resources of employment. The people mostly depended on agriculture. The land was gradually sub-divided and fragmented which led to the decline of food grain production.

Q. What were the causes of the indebtedness of peasants during the British rule?

Ans. The causes of the indebtedness of peasants during the British rule were:-

1. Expenditure on unproductive things:- The peasants used to spend their money on maintaining their families during lean years and on social obligations connected with marriage, birth and death in the family. Therefore, the loan once raised could hardly be paid back.
2. Low income:- The average income of Indian peasants was so low that loan once taken could hardly be paid back.
3. Absence of Co-operative/Agricultural banks:- Because of the absence of co-operative banks (that could give loan to the cultivators on easy terms), the cultivators were forced to get loan from the village lenders at a high rate of interest. Hence a loan once taken could hardly be paid back. So the money lenders acquired the land and cultivators became their serfs.
4. Laws in favour of Zamindars:- Numerous laws enacted during the British rule were in the favour of money lenders and hence the poor cultivators were exploited by the money lenders as high rate of interest was charged on loan and when the cultivators could not pay the debts back, they were deprived of the holdings.

Q. What were the causes of the frequent occurrence of famines in India?

Ans. The causes of the frequent occurrence of famines in India were:-

1. Dependence on Monsoons:- The Indian peasants (crops) mostly depended on the monsoon. If the monsoons failed the crops also failed and there was famine.
2. Encouragement of Commercial Crops:- The British rulers encouraged farmers to raise commercial crops. As a result production of food grains gradually declined which often led to famines.
3. Lack of modern Irrigation facilities:- The means of irrigation weren't so developed and government did not take any interest in this direction.
4. Lack of transport facility:- Due to lack of transport, grains from surplus areas couldn't be transported to famine areas. This made the situation more worse.

Q. What steps were taken by the government to meet the problem of famines?

Ans. Some steps that were taken by the British government to meet the problem of famines were:-

1. Appointment of Famine Commissions:- Famine Commissions were appointed by the government to suggest the ways to meet the problem of famines.
2. Formation of famine code:- To provide guidelines to the administration, 'Famine Code' was framed which included remission of land revenue, extension of irrigation work, monetary relief etc.

3. Improvement in transport:- Good roads were built and railways were constructed with the improvement in transport food-grains from surplus areas could easily be sent to the famine stricken regions.
4. Improvement in Irrigation facilities:- Various bunds and dams were constructed on rivers to check floods as well as to irrigate land.
5. Stock of food grains:- The government began to stock surplus food grains to be utilized in the famine days.

Q. How was the economy of the country and the general life of the people affected by the introduction of railways?

Ans. The introduction of railways had several far reaching effects which are given below:-

1. It made the movement of goods cheaper, quicker and safer. Goods produced in the interior of the country could now reach the outside world.
2. The danger of famines was reduced to a certain extent as food grains could now be sent to the famine affected areas quickly.
3. It promoted internal trade on India and brought prosperity.
4. The railways played an important role in creating a political awakening in India. The feeling of Nationalism developed and many orthodox ideas came to an end.
5. The coal and raw material became easily available so the industries began to develop in India.
6. It helped in leveling the prices of goods in different parts of the country.

Q. What were the industries introduced in India during the British rule?

Ans. The industries introduced in India during the British rule were:-

1. Machine Industry:- It included cotton, jute, iron, cement and sugar industry.
2. Plantation Industry:- It included indigo, tea, coffee, rubber and cinchona plantations.

Q. Why didn't the British government adopt the policy of protection.

Ans. The British government didn't adopt the policy of protection because they wanted to give all facilities to the European industries either in importing or exporting rather than to help Indian industry. The industries owned by the Indians were discriminated against. They couldn't make progress as the government didn't encourage them. But in the wake of swadeshi movement, India wanted to become self-reliant. In 1920's some industries got some protection from the British.

Q. "What were the reasons for the increase of India's industrial backwardness?"

Ans. The reasons for the increase of India's industrial backwardness were:-

1. Industries were localized in a few big cities while in most of the other parts industries remained undeveloped.
2. Most of the industries were owned and controlled by the British and the profit that they made was sent to Britain.
3. There was complete absence of capital or heavy industries. Almost all kinds of machinery had to be imported from outside.
4. The government favoured the British industrialists at the cost of Indian industrialists.
5. The government didn't give any patronage to industries started in India.

Q. What were the reasons for the increase in India's foreign trade in the 20th century?

Ans. The reasons for the increase in India's foreign trade in the 20th century were:-

1. The introduction and expansion of railways in India ensured better, quicker and cheaper transport facilities for expansion of trade.
2. The development of India's trade relation with U.S.A., Japan and Germany enhanced the India's foreign trade.
3. Opening of Suez canal and introduction of steam ships also contributed to the increase in India's foreign trade.
4. With the introduction of mining industries the demand of raw material increased in other countries which also led to the increase in India's foreign trade.

Q. Discuss the causes of the poverty of the Indian people?

Ans. The causes that led to the poverty of the Indian people were:-

1. Agricultural backwardness:- The government didn't take any step towards the development of agriculture. The amount of land revenue received was spent on providing more facilities to the English officials than to carry out any reform in agriculture.
2. Heavy revenue demand:- Heavy revenue was extracted from the cultivators that reduced them to a state of utter poverty.
3. Blow to Indian cottage and small-scale industries:- The handloom, cottage and small-scale industries were totally ruined due to the introduction of cheaper machine made goods of England.
4. Exploitation by Zamindars/Money lenders:- Zamindars and money lenders exploited the poor cultivators that led to their poverty.
5. Extraction of Indian Wealth:- British extracted huge wealth from India that also added to the poverty of people.
6. Exploitation of labour and encouragement to the capitalists:- The British government openly supported the industrialists, landlords and merchants at the cost of the poor labourers who grew poorer day by day.

Q. Who were the main beneficiaries of the progress in agriculture and industry during the British rule in India? Why?

Ans. Landlords, merchants, British and European capitalists were the main beneficiaries of the progress in Agriculture and industry during the British rule.

This was because all the policies of land revenue were in the favours of landlords. Similarly the trade policy of the British was in the favour of European industrialists. Very low duties were imposed on British import and export. The government supported landlords, merchants, industrialists at the cost of poor labourers.

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