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An Institute for Civil Services

MAINS TEST SERIES 2023

GS MAINS Q&A

TOPICAL TEST - 04

(5 QUESTION)

HISTORY

Modern Indian History From About The Middle Of The Eighteenth Century Until The Present Significant Events, Personalities, Issues

HISTORY - 1

Time Allowed: 50 Mins. *Max. Marks: 75*

1. **British land revenue policy was the villain which not only played foul with Indian agriculture but also furthered the economic drain from India to England. Examine.**
2. **Emergence of political organizations in the second half of the 19th century was a result of the changes brought about by the Britishers in India in its social and political landscape. Comment.**
3. **Though Dalhousie was infamous for forced annexation to expand British territory, he laid down the foundation of modern infrastructure in the country and several reforms in society. Discuss.**
4. **The victory of the British in the Battle of Plassey laid the Political foundation stone for the British Empire in India. Examine. Also, discuss the change in the character of the company's administration after the Battle of Plassey.**
5. **Despite an obstructionist colonial presence, some factors did facilitate a modest Indian industrial development. Elaborate.**

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HISTORY - 1

1. British land revenue policy was the villain which not only played foul with Indian agriculture but also furthered the economic drain from India to England. Examine.

Approach

1. ***Introduce with the land revenue policies of British. (40 words)***
2. ***Explain how it played foul with Indian agriculture. (90 words)***
3. ***Explain how it furthered Economic drain. (70 words)***
4. ***Conclude. (50 words)***

Hints:

The state in India derived a large percentage of its income from land. State used to extract land revenue either directly or indirectly through intermediaries. With the decline of the Mughul Empire, there were different rulers in different parts of India with more or less exorbitant claims. Yet in villages agronomy was self sufficient. Instead of improving the state of agriculture British introduced land revenue policies which helped them extract maximum land revenue possible from peasants.

Different land revenue policies under British:

- The Permanent settlement was introduced in Bengal and Bihar under which the state demand was fixed at 90% of the rental. The sum so fixed was unalterable forever. Ownership rights were given to zamindars which were hereditary and transferable.
- Under Ryotwari settlement introduced in Madras, cultivator was recognized as owner of land subject to payment of land revenue. This settlement was not permanent and revised periodically after 20 to 30 years when revenue demand was usually raised.
- Under Mahalwari system introduced in Gangetic valley, the North –west Provinces, parts of Central Nadia and the Punjab, the revenue settlement was made village by village or estate by estate with village heads or heads of families who collectively represented village heads. Land revenue was periodically revised.

The consequences of above policies were disastrous for Indian agriculture in following ways:

- **Commercialisation of land:** Under permanent settlement- revenue demands were exorbitant. Peasants who couldn't pay were ousted out by zamindars in hope of getting higher rent from another tenant. Consequently, a large number of estates were advertised for sale at auction. This created new form of private property in land in a way that benefit of innovation did not go to cultivators.
- **Hindering capital investment:** The high pitch of land assessment, drained the cultivators of its capital, hindered capital investment in Land and, in general, checked expenditure on agricultural improvements.
- **Stagnation in agricultural productivity:** The zamindars had no incentive to invest in agriculture as they were entitled to a fixed amount of revenue, and land was saleable, mortgagable and alienable.

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- Peasants were forced to take credit from informal moneylenders but often failed to repay. This led to rural indebtedness.
- Oppressive ways of collection under Ryotwari system led to distress in villages. The cultivator had no right of appeal to any tribunal he had either to pay or quit. Many ryots abandoned their homes and fled into neighbouring native states. Large tracts of land were thrown out of cultivation.
- **Impoverishment of peasantry due to high demands of taxes:** Agriculture was ruined Famine followed famine. Epidemics, malnutrition and starvation were common place. E.g. - Madras famine of 1877. A general resourcelessness and poverty was created.
- The government's demand on land was uncertain and fluctuating because of periodic revisions. This provided ample opportunity to revenue officers in exercising arbitrary powers. Thus the revenue administration system was marred by corruption unchecked by judiciary.
- The old Indian demand on the land was elastic. Under the British revenue was collected rigidly and inflexibly. This furthered either distress sales or rural indebtedness so that a glut was caused in the market leading to artificial lowering of prices to peasant's great disadvantage.

These very conditions created by land revenue policies furthered the economic drain from India to England. Economic drain refers to part of India's wealth and resources exported to Britain for which India got no adequate economic or material return.

How land revenue policies furthered economic drain?

- A large part of revenues generated through land revenue policies was simply exported to Britain instead of investing in irrigation or improvement of agricultural techniques.
- In the absence of other industry a large part of exports to British was to be met by cheap agricultural produce.
- The ryots were compelled to sell as large a portion of agricultural produce as possible to meet this demand by increasing revenue demands.
- The mechanism of land revenue forced the peasant to pay for the drain as well as provide the agricultural products.

Conclusion:

Land revenue policy is, thus, the villain which played foul with Indian agriculture as well as helped British compel peasants to finance the economic drain also. Hence it is also said that the system worked as a sponge, absorbing good things from Ganges, and squeezing them down on Thames bank.

2. Emergence of political organizations in the second half of the 19th century was a result of the changes brought about by the Britishers in India in its social and political landscape. Comment.

Approach

1. ***Introduce about the political scenario in late 19th century India (40 words)***
2. ***State the reasons for emergence of political parties as a result of British policies (120 words)***
3. ***Highlight the nature of newly formed political organizations (50 words)***
4. ***Conclusion (40 words)***

Hints:

British brought significant changes in Indian political and social spheres, the result of which was the emergence of national movement based on political parties founded on democratic principles and lead by educated middle class intelligentsia.

Following were the reasons for emergence of Political parties:

- The Britishers through several of their policies, establishment of new institutions decimated the old power relations existing in Indian society and thus paving way for the emergence of new power relations based on political organizations.
- **Destruction of old aristocracy and political class:** Through doctrine of lapse, new land revenue system, etc, the old aristocracy and political class were reduced in their significance. These worked on the principle of patronage and feudalism and therefore could get gain traction under Britishers.
- **Ushering in of democratic political system by Britishers:** British by introducing legislative bodies, allowed presentation from various sections to bring in reforms. Parliamentary form of government in Britain, which remained the fountainhead of legislations in India allowing Indians like Dadabhai Nauroji to petition to British authorities for reforms.
- The political conscious Indians realised that existing political associations were too narrowly conceived to be useful in the changed circumstances. For example British Indian Association had increasingly identified itself with the interests of the Zamindars and consequently with the ruling power.
- The newly emerged political organizations had demands like reform in Civil Services examinations, spreading political education among Indians and create a strong public opinion on political questions, unify Indian people on a common political programme, promoting by every legitimate means the political, intellectual and material advancement of the people.

All these were aided by:

1. Spread of modern education which included education of new political ideas developed in west.
2. Establishment of rule of law, concept of equality among Indians
3. Large scale deindustrialization of India by British
4. Spread of modern means of communication
5. Administrative integration of India
6. Physical integration of India, which allowed nationalists from different regions to come together and work together.

Background for emergence of political organizations in India and their nature:

- The political associations in the early half of the nineteenth century were dominated by wealthy and aristocratic elements, were local in character and focused on narrow self-interests.
- The political associations of the second half of the nineteenth century came to be increasingly dominated by the newly formed educated middle class-the lawyers, journalists, doctors, teachers, etc. and they had a wider perspective and a larger agenda.
- The second half of the 19th century witnessed the growth of national political consciousness and foundation and growth of an organized national movement.
- During this period, the modern Indian intelligentsia created political associations to spread political education and to initiate political work in the country.

Conclusion:

All the new political institutions required that Indians must organize themselves, they must have capacity to put their arguments in an impactful way in order to sway the public opinion and this resulted into emergence of new political parties lead by educated middle class. They put forth the damning critique of colonialism through 'Drain of Wealth', worked for agrarian reforms, education reforms, administrative reforms and reforms in Legislative and executive spheres advocating for Indian interests to be at forefront.

3. *Though Dalhousie was infamous for forced annexation to expand British territory, he laid down the foundation of modern infrastructure in the country and several reforms in society. Discuss.*

Approach

1. *Introduce by briefly describing Dalhousie's tenure as the Governor-General of British India (40 words)*
2. *Mention about Dalhousie's expansionary policies (85 words)*
3. *Describe Dalhousie's contribution to modernization (85 words)*
4. *Conclusion (40 words)*

Hints:

Lord Dalhousie was the British governor-general of India from 1847 to 1856, who introduced a number of reforms which paved the way for the modernisation of India and also earned the title, "Maker of the Modern India".

Dalhousie's expansionary policies

Doctrine of lapse

The most repressive and last phase of territorial expansion of British was visible with introduction of Doctrine of lapse by Dalhousie which provided that when the ruler of protected state died without a natural heir, it wasn't allowed to adopt a heir but to be annexed to British India. Satara, Nagpur, Jhansi and Udaipur and several other states were annexed under this doctrine.

Second Anglo Sikh War

Punjab and The first major conflict during the early period of Lord Dalhousie was the Second Anglo Sikh war in 1848-49, which ended with annexation of Punjab and end of Sikh Kingdom.

Second Burmese War

In 1852 commercial disputes in Rangoon prompted new hostilities between the British and the Burmese, a conflict that became the Second Burmese War. It was settled within the year with little loss of life and with the British annexation of Rangoon and the rest of Pegu province.

Annexation of Awadh 1856

Awadh which was one of the most fertile lands was annexed on ground of maladministration. The Kingdom of Oudh was the only great Indian state whose ruler Nawab Wajid Ali Shah was dispossessed on the ground of "intolerable misgovernment".

Military Reforms:

After the conquest of Punjab, Sindh and Avadh, the frontiers of the company were extended and the military interest of India was transferred to the North. Thus, Dalhousie shifted the headquarters of the Bengal Artillery from Calcutta to Meerut. The army head-quarter was also transferred to Shimla so that the army could remain is touch with Governor-General who resided is Shimla.

Thus, motive of Dalhousie to extend direct control over Indian Territory to safeguard British exports was successful but it his act provoked the evicted Zamindars and rulers to revolt against the company in 1857.

Despite his infamous annexation policy and expansion, Dalhousie made several contributions to lay the foundation of modern infrastructure in the country:

- **Railways:** Dalhousie introduced a new system of internal communication in India. He was the father of Indian Railways. Dalhousie's famous Railway Minute of 1853 convinced the home authorities of the need of the railways and laid down the main lines of their development. He envisaged a network of railways connecting the main places with the ports and providing both

for strategically needs and commercial development. Besides facilitating trade and commerce, minimizing distances the railways have gone a long way in uniting India.

- **Telegraph:** In 1852 Dalhousie introduced the Electric Telegraph System in India. The first telegraph line from Calcutta to Agra was opened in 1854, covering 800 miles. By 1857, it was extended to Lahore and Peshawar. People could send message from one place to another place very easily by this telegraph system.
- **Post:** The credit of establishing Postal Department also goes to Lord Dalhousie. In 1854, a new Post Office Act was passed. Under this system, a Director-General was appointed to supervise the work of Post Offices in all the Presidencies; a uniform rate of half-anna per letter was introduced and for the first-time postage stamps were issued.
- **Trade:** Dalhousie's commercial reforms were designed to throw open the produce and market of India to the exploitation of English Capital. All ports of India were declared free. The harbors of Karachi, Bombay and Calcutta were developed and light houses were also constructed. All the sea-trade was captured by the English merchants who had power and resources.
- **Public work department:** Separate Public work department was established in every province. The Chief Works of this department was to construct roads, bridges and government buildings.
- **Canals:** Ganges Canal was declared open to enhance assured irrigation and increase agriculture productivity.

Social Reforms:

- Dalhousie abolished female infanticide which was prevalent among the Rajputs of higher castes. He also abolished the practice of human sacrifice practiced by the Khonds of Orissa, Madras and Central Provinces who had blind belief that the fertility of the soil would be increased by sacrificing human beings.
- Widow Remarriage Act, 1856 was passed which legalized the marriage of Hindu widows. Thus, it improved the life of women in Indian society.
- Anglo-vernacular schools and government colleges were opened on recommendation of Wood's Educational Despatch. Universities were also proposed to be open in Bengal, Bombay and Madras presidencies. The Wood's dispatch laid the foundations of modern education system.
- Dalhousie's special contribution was the construction of an engineering college at Roorkee and in other presidencies. He thus ranks as the father of technical education as distinct from professional education in India.

Conclusion:

Though Dalhousie created modern infrastructure in India but the motive was to enhance control of British administration over India, increased penetration of British goods in Indian markets and perpetuation of exploit of resources of the India. Nevertheless, but most of the reforms of Dalhousie took India to the path of modernization.

4. The victory of the British in the Battle of Plassey laid the Political foundation stone for the British Empire in India. Examine. Also, discuss the change in the character of the company's administration after the Battle of Plassey.

Approach

1. ***Introduce about the Battle of Plassey (40 words)***
2. ***Write down the significance of the Battle wrt British Empire in India. (90 words)***
3. ***Discuss the change in company's administration after the Battle. (70 words)***
4. ***Conclusion (50 words)***

Hints:

The Battle of Plassey was fought between the British East India Company and the Nawab of Bengal and his close allies, the French troops. The battle was won on June 23, 1757, leading to the consolidation of the British in Bengal and later expanding other territories of India.

Background of Battle of Plassey

- The Battle of Plassey was fought on the banks of the Bhagirathi River near Calcutta and Murshidabad which was the then capital city of Bengal. According to some historians, it was more of skirmishes than a battle.
- When Alvardi Khan who was the Nawab of Bengal died in April 1756, his son Siraj-Ud-daula succeeded him. The young Nawab immediately laid siege to Calcutta, capturing it and imprisoning several British officials in June 1756.
- Robert Clive concluded that the only way to secure the interest of the Company was to replace Siraj with a friendly Nawab. General Mir Jafar was found as a possible replacement and a secret agreement was passed to Mir Jafar's residence.

Significance of battle of Plassey

- The beginnings of British political sway over India may be traced back to the battle of Plassey in 1757, when the English East India Company's forces defeated Siraj-ud-Daulah, the Nawab of Bengal.
- The Company was granted undisputed right to free trade in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.
- It also received the Zamindari of the 24 Parganas near Calcutta.
- The new Nawab, Mir Jaffar, was dependent on the British for the maintenance of his position in Bengal. An English army of 6000 troops was maintained in Bengal.
- The wealth paid to British immediately after Plassey was a sum of £800,000
- Mir Jaffar regretted the deal that he struck with British later when he was reduced to a puppet leader only.
- Prior to 1757 the English trade in Bengal was largely financed through import of bullion from England; but after that year not only bullion import stopped, but bullion was exported from Bengal to China and other parts of India, which gave a competitive advantage to the English Company over its European rivals.

Change in the character of the company's administration

- The battle of Plassey was of immense historical importance. It paved way for British mastery of Bengal and eventually the whole of India.
- It boosted British prestige and at a single stroke raised them to the status of major contender for the Indian Empire. Before the battle, it was only just another European company trading in Bengal. But after Plassey they monopolized trade of Bengal.
- Plassey had brought about a gradual transformation in the character of the Company. In the context of the then politics, military control was synonymous with political body. Thus, the Company played a role of commercial-cum-military-cum- political body.
- The rich revenues of Bengal enabled them to organize a strong army and meet the cost of conquest of the rest of the country.
- Control over Bengal played a decisive role in the Anglo French struggle where British were finally victorious.
- The victory of Plassey enabled the Company with its servants to amass untold wealth at the cost of helpless people of Bengal.

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- The conflict at Plassey was also crucial for the East India Company's triumph over its French rivals.

Conclusion:

Events that occurred after the victory at the Battle of Plassey had changed the British East India Company from a trading company to a central power. Thus, the Battle of Plassey marked the beginning of political supremacy of the English East India Company in India.

5. Despite an obstructionist colonial presence, some factors did facilitate a modest Indian industrial development. Elaborate.

Approach

1. ***Introduce about British deindustrialization of India (40 words)***
2. ***Mention the obstructions faced in India's industrial development (80 words)***
3. ***Factors that contributed to limited success (90 words)***
4. ***Conclusion (40 words)***

Hints:

Under pressure from the powerful rising English manufacturing interests, the British Raj dealt a severe blow to Indian industries that led to final extinction- the phase of India's 'deindustrialization'. This period mainly involved British protectionist policies, restricting sales of Indian goods and services within Britain while exposing Indian markets to British goods and services, without tariffs and quotas.

The problems faced by Indian industrial scenario due to British policies:

- Under Company rule, large Indian markets were exposed to British goods which were sold in India without any forms of protection while local Indian producers were heavily taxed.
- Introduction of machine made goods in the Indian subcontinent at a cheaper rate, which led to the destruction of the traditional textile industry of India.
- The abolition of court culture and urban aristocrats resulted in decreased demand for these handicrafts as product demand for these dried up.
- Protectionist policies were set up by the British Empire to restrict the sale of Indian good and services overseas although raw materials used in textile manufacturing such as cotton were imported to Britain factories and worked.
- Economic policies implemented by Britain allowed for a monopoly over India's large market and cotton resources and turned India into a captive market for Britain.

Thus, colonial status seemed to be the strongest stumbling block for India's drive for industrialization. Above all, the contribution of the British Government towards India's industrialization was minimal before 1916, that is, before the establishment of the Industrial Commission. The industrial policy of the imperial power could be described as 'a case of too little and too late'.

Despite the hurdles, industrialization took off due to various factors as mentioned below:

- Since the late nineteenth century, the Indian capitalist class was gradually becoming more matured and influential in policies.
- Till the end of World War One for various reasons the number of registered industrial enterprises had been steadily rising," while developments in the interwar period further strengthened their position.
- Indian capital moved into areas hitherto not developed by foreign capital, such as sugar, paper, cement, iron and steel etc. Similarly, Indian capital also intruded into areas so long dominated by expatriate capital, such as finance, insurance, jute, mining and plantation.

- A growing tendency towards import substitution in consumer goods, Shifting of attention towards the domestic markets, Growth in internal trade, Shifting of traditionally accumulated capital through trade, money lending and landowning co industrial investments, The outflow of foreign capital creating a space for indigenous entrepreneurs were some other factors.
- Spectacular was the rise of the cotton industry, which was now catering for the domestic consumers, reducing Manchester's market share to less than 40 per cent by 1919.
- Industrialists began to organize themselves, and so the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce in 1887 and the Indian Merchants' Chamber in Bombay in 1907 came into existence.

Conclusion:

Above mentioned factors were responsible for the growth of Indian industry. Not only did it trigger development in British ruled India but the nationalist approach of industrialists led to the policy development for the independent India. Historian R. C. Majumder describes the trajectory of industrialization in following words, "The pattern of industrial development which had emerged in the 19th century confined to a limited sector and concentrated in a few unevenly distributed areas, remained virtually unchanged till the beginning of World War I, though within these narrow limits the years 1905-14 witnessed a relatively rapid growth".

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