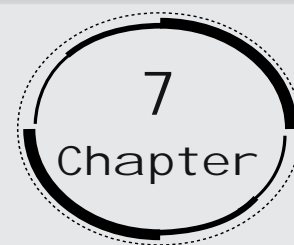


Weavers, Iron Smelters and Factory Owners



Question 1.

What kinds of cloth had a large market in Europe?

Solution:

Cotton and silk textiles had a huge market in Europe. Indian textiles were by far the most popular, both for their fine quality and exquisite craftsmanship. Different varieties of Indian textiles were sold in the Western markets; for example, chintz, cossaes or khassa, bandanna and jamdani. From the 1680's, there started a craze for printed Indian cotton textiles in England and Europe, mainly for their exquisite floral designs, fine texture and relative cheapness. Rich people of England including the Queen herself wore clothes of Indian fabric.

Question 2.

What is jamdani ?

Solution:

Jamdani is a fine muslin on which decorative motifs are woven on the loom, typically in grey and white. Often a mixture of cotton and gold thread is used. The most important centres of jamdani weaving were Dacca in Bengal and Lucknow in the United Provinces.

Question 3.

What is bandanna?

Solution:

'Bandanna' refers to brightly coloured and printed scarf for the neck or head. Originally referring to the hindi word, "bandhna" which means tying, it is a type of cloth produced through a method of tying and dying.

Question 4.

Who are the Agarias?

Solution:

The Agarias are an Indian community of iron smelters. In the late nineteenth century, after a series of famines, a lot of Agarias deserted their villages and never worked as smelters again.

Question 5.

Fill in the blanks:

(a) The word chintz comes from the word _____.

Solution:

(a) The word chintz comes from the word chhint.

(b) Tipu's sword was made of _____ steel.

Solution:

(b) Tipu's sword was made of Wootz steel.

(c) India's textile exports declined in the _____ century.

Solution:

(c) India's textile exports declined in the nineteenth century.

Question 6.

How do the names of different textiles tell us about their histories?

Solution:

(i) European traders first encountered five cotton cloths from India carried by Arab merchants in Mosul in present day Iraq. So they began referring to all finally woven textiles as "muslin" – a word that acquired wide currency.

(ii) When the Portuguese first came to India in search of spices, they landed in Calicut on the Kerala coast in South West India. The cotton textiles which they took back to Europe, along with the spices, came to be called "Calico" (derived from Calicut) and subsequently calico became the general name for all cotton textiles.

(iii) Chintz is derived from the Hindi word "chhint", a cloth with small and colourful flowery designs.

(iv) Bandanna now refers to any brightly coloured and printed scarf for the neck or head. Originally the term derived from the word "bandhna" (Hindi for tying). (v) The other cloths were noted by their place of origin such as, Kazimbazaar, Patna, Orissa, Calcutta, etc.

Question 7.

Why did the wool and silk producers in England protest against the import of Indian textiles in the early eighteenth century?

Solution:

By the early eighteenth century, worried by the popularity of Indian textiles, the wool and silk makers in England began protesting against the import of Indian cotton textiles. At this time, the textile industries had just begun to develop in England. Unable to compete with Indian textiles, English producers wanted a secure market within the country by preventing the entry of Indian textiles. The first to grow under government protection was the calico printing industry. Indian designs were imitated and printed in England on white muslin or plain unbleached Indian cloth. Competition from Indian textiles also led to the invention of the spinning jenny and the use of the steam engine for textile development, thereby making the wool and silk producers in England more independent.

Question 8.

How did the development of cotton industries in Britain affect textile producers in India?

Solution:

The effects of the development of cotton industries in Britain on the textile producers in India were:

(i) Competition - Indian textiles had to compete with British textiles in European and American markets.

- (ii) High duties - Exporting textiles to England became increasingly difficult due to very high duties imposed on Indian textiles imported into Britain.
 - (iii) Capture of foreign markets- By the beginning of the nineteenth century, English-made cotton textiles eliminated Indian textiles from their traditional markets, thereby throwing thousands of Indian weavers out of employment. The English and European companies stopped buying Indian textiles, and their agents no longer gave out advances to weavers to secure supplies.
 - (iv) Capture of the Indian market - By the 1830's, British cotton cloth flooded Indian markets. By the 1880's, two-third of all cotton clothes worn by Indians were made of cloth produced in Britain. This greatly affected both the weavers and the spinners.
- Thus, Indian textiles declined in the nineteenth century, and thousands of Indian weavers and spinners lost their livelihood.

Question 9.

Why did the Indian iron smelting industry decline in the nineteenth century?

Solution:

The Indian iron smelting industry declined in the nineteenth century for the following reasons:

- (i) The forest laws implemented by the colonial administration prevented the free movement of people in reserved forests. Charcoal - an essential ingredient in the iron smelting process - was therefore not accessible.
 - (ii) The iron smelters were in return required to pay a very high amount in tax to the forest department for every furnace they used. This reduced their income and discouraged them from the development of their business.
 - (iii) By the late nineteenth century, iron and steel was being imported from Britain. Iron-smiths began using the imported iron to manufacture utensils and implements. This competition reduced the demand for iron produced by local smelters.
 - (iv) In the late nineteenth century, a series of famines devastated the dry tracts of India. As a result, many of the local smelters, for example, the Agarias stopped work, deserted their villages, and migrated, looking for some other work to survive the hard times.
- By the early twentieth century, the artisans producing iron and steel faced a new competition from iron and steel factories.

Question 10:

What problems did the Indian textile industry face in the early years of its development?

Solution:

The development of cotton industries in Britain affected textile producers in India in the following ways:

- (i) Indian textiles now had to compete with British textiles in the European and American markets. Exporting textiles to England also became increasingly difficult since very high duties were imposed on Indian textiles imported into Britain.
- (ii) By the beginning of the nineteenth century, English made cotton textiles successfully ousted Indian goods from their traditional markets in Africa, America and Europe.
- (iii) Thousands of weavers in India were now thrown out of employment.

- (iv) Bengal weavers were the worst hit. English and European companies stopped buying Indian goods and their agents no longer gave out advances to weavers to secure supplies. Distressed weavers wrote petitions to the government to help them.
- (v) By the 1880s, two-thirds of all the cotton clothes worn by Indians were made of cloth produced in Britain. This affected not only specialist weavers but also spinners. Thousands of rural women who made a living by spinning cotton thread were rendered jobless.

Question 11:

What helped TISCO expand steel production during the First World War?

Solution:

- (i) In 1914, the First World War broke out.
- (ii) Steel produced in Britain now had to meet the demands of the war in Europe.
- (iii) So imports of British steel into India declined dramatically and the Indian Railways turned to TISCO for supply of rails.
- (iv) As the war dragged on for several years, TISCO had to produce shells and carriage wheels for the war.
- (v) By 1919, the colonial government was buying 90 per cent of the steel manufactured by TISCO.
- (vi) Over time, TISCO became the biggest steel industry within the British Empire.