

Long Answer Questions

Q. 1. Why did the British government scrap the 'Corn Laws'? What were its effects on Britain?

Ans. Population growth from the late 18th century had increased the demand for food grains in Britain.

As urban centres expanded and industries grew, the demand for agricultural products increased, pushing up food grain prices.

Under pressure from landed groups, the government also restricted the import of corn.

The laws allowing the government to do this were commonly known as 'Corn Laws'.

Unhappy with high food prices, industrialists and urban dwellers forced the abolition of the Corn Laws.

Effects:

After the Corn Laws were scrapped, food could be imported into Britain more cheaply than it could be produced within the country.

British agriculture was unable to compete with imports.

Vast areas of land were now left uncultivated and thousands of men and women were thrown out of work. They flocked to the cities or migrated overseas.

Q. 2. Nineteenth century indenture has been described as a 'new system of slavery'. Elucidate with examples.

Ans. In the 19th century, hundreds of thousands of Indian and Chinese labourers went to work on plantations, in mines and in road and railway construction projects around the world.

It was a world of faster economic growth as well as great misery, higher incomes for some and poverty for others.

In India, indentured labourers were hired under contracts which promised return travel to India after they had worked for five years on their employer's plantations.

Gradually, in India, cottage industries declined, land rents rose, lands were cleared for mines and plantations. All this affected the lives of the poor; they failed to pay their rents, became indebted and were forced to migrate in search of work.

The main destinations of Indian indentured migrants were the Caribbean islands, Trinidad, Guyana, Surinam, Mauritius, Fiji and Ceylon and Malaya.

Recruitment was done by agents engaged by employers and paid a small commission.

Agents also sometimes tempted these migrants by providing false information about final destinations, modes of travel, nature of work and living and working conditions. Sometimes, agents even forcibly abducted less willing migrants.

Q. 3. How did various cultures blended with the migrants and the inhabitants?

Ans. In Trinidad, the annual Muharram procession was transformed into a carnival called 'Hosay', in which workers of all races and religions joined.

The protest religion of 'Rasta fasionism' also reflected social and cultural links with Indian migrants to the Caribbean.

'Chutney Music', a fusion, popular in Trinidad and Guyana is another example of postindenture period.

These forms of cultural fusion are part of the making of the global world, where things from different places got mixed and became something entirely new.

Q. 4. What was the role of Indian entrepreneurs abroad?

Ans. Shikaripuri Shroffs and Nattu Kottai Chettiar were among the many group of bankers and traders who financed export agriculture in Central and South-East Asia, using their own funds or the borrowed money from European banks.

They had a sophisticated system to transfer money over large distances and even developed their own corporate organisation.

Hyderabadi Sindi traders, however, ventured beyond European colonies.

They had established emporia at busy ports worldwide, selling local and imported artifacts to tourists.

Q. 5. Why was the first world war called the Industrial war or 'World war'?

Ans. (i) The first World War was the first modern industrial war. In this war, machine guns, tanks, aircrafts, chemical weapons were used on a massive scale.

(ii) Millions of soldiers were recruited from around the world and were brought to the front in ships and trains.

(iii) About 9 million civilians died and 20 millions were injured.

(iv) Most of the killed and injured were men of working age, reducing the able-bodied workforce in Europe.

(v) During the war, industries were reconstructed to produce war related goods.

(vi) Britain borrowed large sums of money from US banks. Thus, the war transformed the US from being an international debtor to an international creditor.

Q. 6. “One important feature of the US economy in the 1920s was mass production.” Prove this with an example.

Ans. A well-known pioneer of mass production was the car manufacturer, ‘Henry Ford’.

He adopted an assembly line technique of a slaughter house.

He realised that the ‘assembly line’ method would allow a faster and cheaper way of producing vehicles.

This method forced workers to repeat a single task mechanically and continuously.

This was a way of increasing the output per worker by speeding up the pace of work.

At first, workers were unable to cope with the load of work but Henry Ford doubled the daily wages.

This doubling of daily wages was considered ‘best cost-cutting decision’ he had ever made.

Later, this system of mass production was followed by many other countries. In the US, with this system, car production rose from 2 millions to above 5 millions.

Q. 7. Explain how the US was most severely affected by the worldwide economic depression?

Ans. With the fall of prices and prospect of depression, US banks also slashed domestic lending.

Farmers could not sell their production, households were ruined and businesses collapsed.

With falling incomes, many households could not repay what they had borrowed and were forced to give up their homes, cars and other durable items.

Ultimately, the US banking system collapsed. Unable to recover investments, collect loans and repay depositors, thousands of banks went bankrupt and were forced to close.

Q. 8. How does food offer long distance cultural exchanges?

Ans. Traders and travellers introduced new crops to the lands they travelled. Even ‘ready’ food stuff in distant part of the world might share common origins.

It is believed that noodles travelled west from China to become spaghetti or perhaps, Arab traders took pasta to Sicily, an island of Italy.

Similar foods were also known in India and Japan, so the truth about their origins may never be known, but they too travelled from one country to another.

This is how long distance cultural contacts in the pre-modern era were possible with the travelling of various food items.

Q. 9. Give a brief description of how meat was transported to various parts of the world with the development of technology.

Ans. Till 1870s animals were shipped live from America to Europe and then slaughtered when they arrived there.

Live animals took a lot of ship space and many in voyage, fell ill, lost weight or became unfit to eat.

Meat was hence an expensive luxury beyond the reach of the European poor.

Then came the new technology, namely refrigerated ships, which enabled the transport of perishable foods like meat over long distances.

Now animals were slaughtered for food at the starting point in America, Australia or New Zealand—and then transported to Europe as frozen meat. This reduced shipping costs and lowered meat prices in Europe.

Q. 10. What was the impact of colonialism on various colonies?

Ans. (i) Trade flourished and markets expanded in the late 19th century but it also led to loss of freedom and livelihoods.

(ii) European conquests produced many painful economic, social and ecological changes through which the colonised societies were brought into the world economy.

(iii) Rival European powers in Africa drew up the borders demarcating their respective territories, being called as paper partition.

(iv) Britain and France made vast additions to their overseas territories in the late 19th century. Belgium and Germany became new colonial powers.

(v) The US also became a colonial power in the late 1890's by taking over some colonies that were earlier held by Spain.

Q. 11. What was the role of agents in the recruitment of labour?

Ans. Recruitment was done by agents engaged by employers and paid a small commission.

Many migrants agreed to take up work hoping to escape poverty or oppression in their home villages.

Agents also tempted the prospective migrants by providing false information about final destinations, modes of travel, the nature of the work and living and working conditions.

Often migrants were not even told that they were to take a long sea voyage. Sometimes agents even forcibly abducted less willing migrants.

Q. 12. Why did the inflow of fine Indian cotton begin to decline in England?

Ans. Historically, fine cottons produced in India were exported to Europe.

(i) With industrialisation, British cotton manufacture began to expand and industrialists pressurised the government to restrict cotton imports into Britain and protect local industries.

(ii) Tariffs were imposed on cloth imports into Britain, consequently the inflow of fine Indian cotton began to decline.

(iii) British manufacturers also began to seek overseas markets for their cloth.

(iv) Excluded from the British market by tariff barriers, Indian textiles now faced stiff competition in other international markets.

Q. 13. State how Britain found it difficult to recapture the Indian market after World War I.

Ans. (i) Post war economic recovery proved difficult. Britain, which was the world's leading economy in the pre-war period, in particular, faced a prolonged crisis.

(ii) While Britain was pre occupied with war, industries had developed in India and Japan.

(iii) After the war, Britain found it difficult to recapture its earlier position of dominance in the Indian market, and to compete with Japan internationally.

(iv) To finance war expenditures, Britain had borrowed liberally from the US.

This meant that at the end of the war Britain was burdened with huge external debts.

Q. 14. Workers at Ford factory could not cope with the stress of working on assembly line. How did Henry Ford recover the workers?

Ans. (i) At first, workers at the Ford factory were unable to cope with the stress of working on assembly lines in which they could not control the pace of work. So they quit in large numbers.

(ii) In desperation, Ford doubled the daily wages to \$ 5 in Jan. 1914. At the same time he banned trade unions from operating in his plants.

(iii) Henry Ford recovered the high wage by repeatedly speeding up the production line and forcing workers to work even harder.

(iv) So much so, he would soon described his decision to double the daily wage as the 'best cost-cutting decision' he had ever made.

Q. 15. Did housing and consumer boom lead to prosperity in the US?

Ans. (i) The housing and consumer boom of the 1920's created the basis of prosperity in the US.

(ii) Large investments in housing and household goods seemed to create a cycle of higher employment and incomes, rising consumption demand, more investment and yet more employment and incomes.

(iii) In 1923, US resumed exporting capital to the rest of the world and became the largest overseas lender.

(iv) US imports and capital exports also boosted European recovery and world trade and income growth over the next six years.

Q. 16. What was the effect of world economic crisis on rural India?

Ans. (i) The indebtedness of Indian peasants increased. They used up their savings, mortgaged lands and sold whatever jewellery and precious metals they had, to meet their expenses.

(ii) In these depression years, India became an exporter of precious metals, notably gold.

(iii) Indian global economic recovery certainly helped speed up Britain's recovery but did little for the Indian peasants.

(iv) Rural India was thus seething with unrest when Mahatma Gandhi launched the Civil Disobedience Movement at the height of the depression in 1931.