

THEME – 8

PEASANT, ZAMINDARS AND STATE

Key concepts in nutshell

1. Peasants and agricultural production - Geographical Diversity

Looking for sources – Historical Epic and Records, Important chronicles – Ain-i-Akbari, Records from Gujrat, Maharashtra and Rajasthan.

Peasants and their lands – cultivation was based on the principle of individual ownership.

Irrigation and Technology – Expansion of agriculture, monsoon remained the backbone of Indian agriculture, artificial system of irrigations had to be devised, agriculture often harnessed cattle energy.

An abundance of crops – two major crops - the kharif and the rabi, new crops came from different parts of the world.

2. The village community.

Caste and the rural milieu – Rajputs are mentioned as peasants.

Panchayats and headman – The panchayats was usually a heterogeneous body, the headman was chosen through the consensus of the village elders, functions of the panchayat.

Village artisans – The existence of substantial members of artisans.

A little republic – deep inequities based on caste and gender distinctions.

3. Women in agrarian Society – women's role in the production process, high mortality rates among women, women petitioned to the panchayat, hindu and muslim women inherited zamindaris.

4. Forest and tribes –

Beyond settled villages, livelihood came from the gathering of forest produce, hunting and shifting agriculture, jungles provided a good defence.

Inroads into forests – the state required elephants for the army, hunting expeditions by the Mughals, the spread of commercial agriculture

A. Very short questions (02 Marks each)

Q1. Mention various duties performed by state officials in the 16th century?

Ans. They collect land revenue, measure the lands and keep records etc.

Q2. Who was the author of Ain-I Akbari?

Ans. Abul Fazl, writer of Ain-I Akbari, he was a famous Persian author, gems of Akber's court.

Q3. Who were Raiyat? How many types of Raiyat?

Ans. They were peasants. There are two types of Raiyat - Khud-khasta and Pahi-khasta.
Khud-khasta – They were residents of the village in which they held their land.
Pahi-khasta – They were non-resident cultivators who belonged to some other village, but cultivated lands were else were on a contractual basis.

Q4. How many seasons of agriculture according to Ain?

Ans. According to Ain-i-Akbari, agriculture was organized around the two major seasonal cycles – The kharif and the rabi.

Kharif – rice and jawar. Rabi – wheat and gram

Q5. What was Jins-i-Kamil?

Ans. Literally perfect crops. Example - cotton and sugarcane.

B. Short Questions (05 marks each)

Q6. Describe the functions of panchayat?

Ans. 1. Community welfare – Construction of bund or digging the canal which peasants usually could not afford to do on their own.
2. Arrangements against natural calamities, like floods, famine, Droughts etc.
3. Regulate rural societies, like marriage and caste.
4. To ensure that caste boundaries among the various communities
5. Punishment – Example - to levy fines and inflict from the community.

Q7. Describe Ain-i-Akbari?

Ans. 1. Vision of Akbar's empire.
2. Strong ruling class.
3. The organization of the court, administration and the army.
4. Included detailed revenue, records – with the help of Todarmal tried to reorganized the whole revenue system.
5. Useful description of agrarian society.

Q8. What were the role played by women in agrarian society?

Ans. 1. Women worked shoulder to shoulder with men in fields.

2. Women sowed, weeded, threshed and winnowed the harvest.
3. Craft production – such as spinning yarn, sifting and kneading clay for pottery and embroidery.
4. Some restriction during some days of month – women were not allowed to touch the plough or the potter's wheel in western India.
5. Produce children and look after them.

Q9. How land revenue was fixed?

- Ans. 1. It consisted of two stages - Jama and Hasil. Jama was the amount assessed and Hasil the amount collected.
2. Both cultivated and cultivable land measured in each province.
 3. Prepared annual record of the number of cultivators in each village
 4. Officials were appointed to measure land revenue.
 5. The Dewan, who was responsible for supervising the fiscal system of the empire.

Q10. Explain the salient features of zabti system?

Ans.

1. Measurement of land was compulsory.
2. Classification of land:- Polaj, Parauti, Chachar, Banjar.
3. Calculation of the average products.
4. Fixation of state share.
5. Commutation into cash.
6. Collection of land revenue.

Long Questions (10 marks)

Q11. Who were zamindars? What were their functions? 2+8=10

Ans. Zamindars were the part of rural society, who lived on agricultural production had milkiyat belongs to upper caste. New Zamindars emerged from lower caste.

Functions of Zamindars :

1. Collect revenue.
2. Mediate between king and peasant.
3. Maintain military.
4. Developed agricultural land.
5. Give money to farmers for agriculture.
6. Sell their own agricultural produce.
7. Make an arrangement for weekly or fortnightly market in the villages.

8. Making arrangement for repairing roads and water sources.

12. Passage Based Question:-

Read the given passage carefully and answer the question that follows;

CASH OR KIND

The Ain on land revenue collection

Let him (the amil-guzar) not make it a practice of taking only in cash but also in kind. The latter is effected in several ways. First, kankut: in the Hindi language Kan signifies grain, and kut, estimate. If any doubts arise, the crops should be cut and estimated in three lots, the good, the middling and the inferior and the hesitation removed. Often, too the land taken by appraisal, gives a sufficiently accurate return. Secondly, batai, also called bhaoli, the crops are reaped and stacked and divided by agreement in the presence of the parties. But in the case several intelligent inspectors are required; otherwise, the evil-minded and false are given to deception. Thirdly, khet-batai when they divided the fields after they are sown. Fourthly, lang batai; after cutting the grain, they form it in heaps and divide it among themselves, and each takes his share home and turns it to profit.

Q1. Explain the term Kankut? (2)

Ans. In the Hindi language Kan signifies grain and kut means estimate.

Q2. Explain the system of batai or bhaoli system of land revenue collection? (2)

Ans. The crop are reaped and stacked and divided by agreement in the parties. But in this cash several intelligent inspectors are required, otherwise, the evil minded and false are given to deception.

Q3. Explain the system of lang batai? (2)

Ans. After cutting the grain they form it in heaps and divide it among themselves, and each takes his share home and turns it to profit.

Q4. Which system of revenue collection, do you think, is better and why? (2)

Ans. Long Batai, because they divided equal among themselves and get profit.