

CHAPTER – 7

Weavers, Iron Smelters and Factory Owners

❖ LET'S RECALL

Question 1:

What kinds of cloth had a large market in Europe?

Answer:

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.

(a) Different varieties of Indian textiles were sold in the markets: for example, chintz, cossaes or khassa, bandanna and Jamdani.

(b) From the 1680's, there started a craze for printed cotton textiles in England and Europe mainly for their exquisite floral designs, fine texture and relative cheapness.

(c) European traders preferred fine cotton cloth from India carried by Arab merchants in Mosul in present-day Iraq.

(d) The Portuguese took back cotton textiles called 'calico' to Europe.

(e) Europeans also ordered printed cotton cloth called 'chintz'.

(f) Rich people of England including the Queen herself wore clothes of Indian fabrics.

Question 2:

What is Jamdani?

Answer:

Jamdani is a vividly patterned, sheer cotton fabric, traditionally woven on a handloom by craftspeople and apprentices around Dhaka. Jamdani is a time-consuming and labor-intensive form of weaving because of the richness of its motifs, which are created directly on the loom using the discontinuous weft technique, typically in grey and white.

Question 3:

What is bandanna?

Answer:

The word 'bandanna' refers to any brightly coloured and printed scarf for the neck or head. Sometimes bandanna is an oversize handkerchief used as a head covering or scarf. The most usual pattern is paisley.

Question 4:

Who are the Agarias?

Answer:

The Agaria were an Indian community of iron smelters, who were specialized in the field of craft. They declined rapidly after the import of English steel in India was promoted during the 20th century and the weapons and utensils were made using English steel.

Question 5:

Fill in the blanks:

- (a) The word chintz from the word _____.
- (b) Tipu's sword was made of _____ steel.
- (c) India's textile exports declined in the _____ century.

Answer:

- (a) The word chintz from the word **Chhint**.
- (b) Tipu's sword was made of **Wootz** steel.
- (c) India's textile exports declined in the **eighteenth** century.

❖ LET'S DISCUSS

Question 6:

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

Answer:

There are various examples of names of textiles derived from different languages.

- Fine cotton made in India was exported to Mosul in present-day Iraq by Arab merchants. European traders purchased this cotton and were impressed by the fine quality and called it "Muslin".
- The English word Chintz is derived from Chhint, a Hindi word.
- 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".

- Originally the term, bandanna derived from the word ‘bandhana’ (Hindi for tying). The widespread use of such words shows how popular Indian textiles had become in different parts of the world.

Question 7:

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

Answer:

Textile industry had just begun to develop in England in 18th century. Wool and silk producer of England found themselves unable to compete with Indian textile. They wanted to secure the market by preventing Indian textiles to enter the market. Worried by the popularity of Indian textiles, they began protesting against the import of Indian cotton textiles. In 1720, the British government enacted a legislation banning the use of printed cotton textiles too.

Question 8:

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

Answer:

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

(a) Indian textiles now had to compete with Britain textiles in the European and American markets.

(b) Exporting textiles to England also became increasingly difficult since very high duties were imposed on Indian textiles imported to British.

Thus, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, British manufactures cotton textiles ousted the Indian textiles from their traditional markets in Africa, America and Europe.

Question 9:

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

Answer:

Import of steel ingots from Britain gradually led to decline of the Indian iron smelting industry in the nineteenth century. There are some other reasons:

- (a) The new forest laws led to the decline of craft of iron smelting.
- (b) When the colonial government prevented people from entering the reserved forests, the iron smelters could not find wood for charcoal.
- (c) Even when they were granted access the iron smelters had to pay a very high tax to the forest department for every furnace used. This reduced their income.
- (d) Moreover iron and steel was being imported from Britain.

Question 10:

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

Answer:

The textiles industry of India faced many problems in the first few decades of its existence. Competing with cheap textiles imported from Britain was difficult. The governments of most of the European countries protected their local industries by heavy import duties. The colonial government in India did not provide such protection to local industries.

Here are some problems:

- (a) Indian textiles now had to compete with British textiles in European and American markets.
- (b) Exporting textiles to England also became increasingly difficult since very high duties were imposed on Indian textiles imported to Britain.
- (c) European companies had stopped buying Indian goods and their agents no longer gave out advantages to weavers to secure supplies.
- (d) By 1830s, two-thirds of all the cotton made of clothes produced in Britain.

Question 11:

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

Answer:

The First World War changed the situation. Steel produced in Britain was being utilized to meet the demands of the war. As a result, the Indian Railways turned to TISCO for supply of rails.

(a) Steel produced in Britain now had to meet the demands of war in Europe. So, imports of British steel into India declined.

(b) The Indian railways turned TISCO for supply of rails.

(c) As the war dragged on for several years, TISCO had to produce shells and carriage wheels for the war.

(d) By 1919 the colonial government was buying 90% of the steel manufactured by the TISCO.