

UNIVERSITY OF DELHI  
DELHI SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS  
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

Minutes of Meeting

Subject : Generic Elective (GE-19) IV/VI/VIII Sem.

Course : Economy of Colonial India – ECON069

Credits : 4 (3L+1T)

Date of Meeting : January 24, 2024

Venue : Department of Economics, Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi

Convenor : Rohit Parasar, Varun Kumar Das

Attended by

Teacher Name College Name

1. Saumyajit Bhattacharya, Kirori Mal College
2. Monami Sinha, Kamla Nehru College
3. Nehkholen Haokip, Shyam Lal College (E)
4. C. Saratchand, Satyawati College

Eligibility Criteria to opt this course: Class XII

Prerequisites to opt this course: NIL

Learning Objectives

The Learning Objectives of this course are as follows:

- This course examines some key spheres and trends of India's economy under colonial rule and situates them in the realms of land, labour, capital and state policy as they emerged from the shadows of the Mughal decline and moved into the colonial era.
- A special focus will be given on the peasants, artisans, migrants and their changing relationships with state power.
- The course will revisit some influential debates of Indian economic history: deindustrialisation, the nature of growth under colonial conditions, forced commercialization, the modernity of its industrialisation, working classes, drain of wealth and the role of the colonial state.

Learning outcomes

The Learning outcomes of this course are as follows:

- The students will be able to learn economic transformation from pre-colonial period to the British colonial regime that paved the way of distorted path of growth and development.
- They will understand the nature of colonial economy and how resources of colonies were exploited by the colonial power.
- They will acquire skill to critically engage with ideas of economic changes in the last two centuries.

Scheme of Examination

The maximum marks for the final examination would be 90, with the remaining 70 marks being allocated as follows: 30 marks for internal assessment and 40 marks for tutorials based assessment. In the final examination students should be asked to answer four questions out of eight. Questions may span across countries and units of the syllabus.

## Course Outline and Readings

Note: Readings with an asterisk (\*) mark are essential for teachers. The students may be encouraged to read them, but no direct questions should be asked from these readings.

### UNIT I: Economic transformation from pre-colonial to colonial regime (12 hours)

Economic transition, Colonial exploitation and resultant tyranny affected the trend of population, national income; occupational structure, merchandise trade, emergence of state with the East India Company and nature of its rule.

P. Parthasarathy, 2011, *Why Europe Grew Rich and Asia did not: Global Economic Divergence, 1600-1850*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Chapter 2 on India and the global economy, 1600–1800: Introduction pp. 21-27; Section on Bullion in the global economy pp: 46-50 & Chapter 8 on Modern industry in early nineteenth-century India: Section on The debate on the nineteenth-century Indian economy pp 224-226; Section on Industrialization in early nineteenth-century India pp: 239-244; Section on State and economy in nineteenth-century India pp: 251-262.

(\*) Sumit Guha, 1991, Mortality decline in early 20th century India, *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, vol. 28, Issue 4, pp. 371-391.

### UNIT II: Agrarian Transformation (12 hours)

Colonial Rule on Indian Soil affected land revenue settlements, commercialization of agriculture, changing cropping pattern, land market, rural credit and indebtedness. It further influenced agrarian relations that includes agricultural labour, regional variations, peasant commodity production and generated debates on the 'mode of production in Indian agriculture', the 'invisible' women of India's agrarian history.

Tirthankar Roy, 2011, *The Economic History of India 1857-1947*, 3rd edn, Oxford University Press, Delhi, Chapter 4: Agriculture, pp. 104-148. (Note: pp: 40-41 on Famines to be de-emphasised for examination).

Irfan Habib, 2006, *Indian Economy 1858-1914, A People's History of India*, vol. 28, Tulika, Delhi, Chapter 3: Agriculture, pp: 51-91.

(\*) L. Chaudhary, B. Gupta, T Roy and A. V. Swami, 2016, Agriculture in Colonial India, in L. Chaudhary, B. Gupta, T Roy and A. V. Swami (eds.), *A New Economic History of Colonial India*, Routledge, London and New York, Chapter 7, pp. 100-116.

### UNIT III: The de-industrialisation debate (12 hours)

Role of infrastructure for merchandise trade, evolution of entrepreneurial and industrial structure; constraints on industrial growth; labour relations; drain of wealth; international trade and Balance of Payments

P. Parthasarathi, 2009, Historical Issues of Deindustrialization in Nineteenth Century South India, in T Roy and Giorgio Riello (eds) *How India Clothed the World: The World of South Asian Textiles, 1500-1850*, Brill, Leiden, pp. 415-435. This reading is also relevant for Unit 2.

MD Morris, 1965, *Summary and Conclusions in Emergence of an Industrial Labour Force in India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, Chapter 11, pp. 198-210.

Irfan Habib, 2006, *Indian Economy 1858-1914, A People's History of India*, vol. 28, Tulika, Delhi, Chapter 2: Colonialism and the Indian Economy, pp: 23-50.

Rajat Ray (ed.), 1994, Introduction in Entrepreneurship and Industry in India, Oxford University Press, Delhi, pp.1-69. This reading is also relevant for Unit 4.

(\*) Roy, T., 2018, A Business History of India: Enterprise and the Emergence of Capitalism from 1700, Cambridge University Press, Delhi, Chapter 4: Capital and Empire (1850-1930): Trade and Finance, pp: 101-125.

#### UNIT IV: Evolution of State and Financial Market (9 hours)

Evolution of state and its function for social welfare and relief under famine and starvation; Public Finance, Government revenue, expenditure and investment over the years; Emergence of Modern Banking in India and its role in economy; Overall assessment of colonial economy: stagnation and decline with regional variations.

Ira Klein, 1984, When Rains Fail: Famine relief and mortality in British India, Indian Economic and Social History Review, vol. 21, issue 2, pp. 185-214.

David Washbrook, 2012, The Indian Economy and the British Empire in Douglas M Peers and Nandini Gooptu (ed.) India and the British Empire, Oxford University Press, Delhi, Chapter 3, pp. 44-74.