
Chapter-10

Colonialism and the Countryside

- Bengal - Establishment of colonial rule - New land revenue, Auction system under Warren Hastings - 1793, Permanent Revenue settlement in Bengal by Lord Cornwallis.
- Crises in village economy, revenue demand of the state was fixed.
- The rise of the Jotedars, their land was cultivated through share croppers.
- Resistance of Zamindars, their land was auctioned frequently.
- The fifth report -report submitted to British parliament 1813
- The Hoe and the Plough - Shifting agriculture, expensive of village economy.
- Paharias -hunters food gathers connected with forests, invaded settled farmers 1770.
- Santhals - Settled in bangal- practiced cultivation land demarcated to them known as Daman-i-koh.
- Conflicts with unsettled paharias -1850 - they resisted the British - Santhal revolt.
- Revolt in the Bombay and Deccan - 1875
- Burning of account book of money lenders and shop keepers
- New revenue System - Ryotwari system in Bombay Deccan - Direct settlement, land assessed for 30 yrs subject to periodic revision:

The problem of unpaid revenue.

- In introducing the permanent settlement, the British hoped to resolve the problems they had been facing since the conquest of Bengal.
- The rural economy in Bengal was in crisis with recurrent famines and declining agriculture output.
- The problem lay in identifying individuals who could both improve agriculture and contract to pay the fixed revenue to the state.
- The permanent settlement was made with the rajas and taluqdars of Bengal.
- They were classified as Zamindars and had to pay the revenue that was fixed.
- The Zamindar was not the landowner in the village, but a revenue Collector of the state.
- The zamindar collected rent from different villages, paid the revenue to the company, and retained the differences as his income.
- He was expected to pay the Company regularly, failing which his estate could be auctioned.

Why zamindars defaulted on payments:

- The initial demand was very high: It was felt that if the demand was fixed for all time to come the company would never be able to claim a share of increased income from land when prices rose and cultivation expanded.
- The company increased the revenue and argued that the burden on the Zamindar would decline as agriculture production expands and price rose.



II Imposition of high demand:

- The price of agriculture produce was depressed, the ryots could not pay their dues to the zamindar.
- The zamindar could not collect the rent and was not able to pay the company.

III The revenue was invariable:

- The revenue was invariable, regardless of the harvest, and had to pay punctually.
- They followed sunset law.

IV The powers of the Zamindars limited:

- The permanent settlement limited the powers of the zamindars to collect the rent from the ryot and manage his zamindari.

The rise of the jotedars

- A group of rich peasants consolidated their position in the villages.
- This class of rich peasant was known as jotedar.
- The jotedars had acquired vast areas of land.
- They controlled local trade as well as money lending, exercising immense power over the poorer cultivators of the region.
- A large part of their land was cultivated through sharecrop
- When the estate of the zamindar was auctioned for failure to make revenue payment, jotedars were often amongst the purchasers.
- The jotedars were the most powerful in North Bengal, in some places they were called haoladars, gantidars or Mendal

The accounts of Buchanan

- He was an employee of the British East India Company
- He marched everywhere with a large army of people – draughtsman, surveyors, palanquin bearers, coolies.
- The cost of the travels was borne by the East India Company.
- He was perceived as an agent of the sarkar.
- He observed the stones and rocks and different strata and layers of soil.
- He searched for minerals and stones that were commercially valuable, he recorded all signs of iron ore and mica, granite and saltpeter.
- He carefully observed the local practices of salt –making and iron ore mining.

