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Themes in Indian History -Chapter (8-12)

**Chapter 8 - Peasants, Zamindars and the State Agrarian Society
and the Mughal Empire**

Chapter 9 - Kings and Chronicles The Mughal Courts

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Chapter 8 - Peasants, Zamindars and the State Agrarian Society and the Mughal Empire

- During 16th and 17th centuries, nearly 85% of Indian population lived in villages.
- Agriculture was the main occupation of the people.
- Peasants and landlords were engaged in agricultural production.
- Agriculture, the common occupation of peasants and landlords created a relationship of co-operation, competition and conflict among them.
- Agriculture was the main source of the revenue of the Mughal Empire. That was why revenue accessor, collectors and record-keepers always tried to control the rural society.
- The basic unit of agricultural society was the village. It was inhabited mostly by the peasants.
- Peasants were engaged in the agricultural activities through the years.
- Our major sources of the agricultural history of the 16th and 17th centuries were the chronicles and documents written by the scholars under the supervision of the Mughal court.
- Ain-i Akbari, written by Abu'l-Fazl has records of arrangements made by the state for ensuring cultivation, collection of taxes by the state to regulate the relationship between state and rural zamindar.
- Sources of 17th centuries depict that there were two kinds of peasants. These were the Khud Kashta and Pahi Kashta.
- Khud Kashta permanently lived in villages. They had their own land and practised agriculture over there, while the Pahi Kashta cultivated land on a contractual basis, which originally belonged to someone else.
- Abundance of land, availability of labourers and mobility of the peasants were the major causes for the expansion of agriculture.
- Rice, wheat and millets were the commonly cultivated crops.
- Agriculture was mainly organised in two major seasons; Rabi and Kharif. Maximum two crops were sown in a year.
- Monsoon was considered as the backbone of the Indian agriculture during these days. Hence, agriculture was mainly dependent on rainfall.



- Many new crops like maize, tomatoes, potatoes and chillies were introduced here from the new world in the 17th century.
- Village panchayat was elected by the assembly of the elders. The headmen of the panchayat was called Mandal or Muqaddam. He enjoyed his post until he had the confidence of the elders of village.
- Village panchayat had the right to levy fines and expulsion of anyone from the community expulsion from the community was a strict step which was meted out for a limited period.
- It was very difficult to recognise the difference between peasants and artisans. It was so because both these two groups used to perform both kinds of works.
- People such as, potters, carpenters, blacksmiths, barbers, goldsmiths, etc. provided their services to the village men and were compensated through villagers by a large number of means.
- Jajmani system was also prevalent there. Under this system, blacksmiths, carpenters and goldsmiths were remunerated by Zamindars of Bengal for their work by paying them a small daily allowance diet and money.
- Among the landed gentry women enjoyed the right to inherit property.
- The term 'Jungli' was used to describe those whose livelihood came from hunting, gathering and from forest produces.
- Zamindari consolidation was a slow process. It could be done through various sources like colonisation of new lands, by transfers of rights, with the order of the state and by purchase. These were those processes which perhaps permitted lower castes to reach to the ranks of Zamindars.
- Zamindars played an important role in colonisation of agricultural land and helped the setting cultivators by providing them with means of cultivation and cash loans.
- Ain-i Akbari discussed many matters in details, i.e. the court and administration of the empire, sources of revenue, literary, cultural and religious traditions of the people.
- Ain-i-Akbari remained an extraordinary document of its time even after certain drawbacks.
- During the 16th and 17th centuries most of the population of India, i.e. about 85 percent lived in villages. Both peasants and landed elites were involved in agricultural production and claimed their rights to have a share of the total produce.



Historical Sources of Agricultural Society and Mughal Empire:

The basic unit of agricultural society was village, inhabited by peasants who performed manifold tasks, like-tilling the soil, sowing seeds, harvesting the crop, etc. Major source for the agrarian history of the 16th and early 17th centuries are chronicles and documents from the Mughal court.

Ain-i-Akbari:

- Most important chronicle was Ain-i Akbari authorised by Akbar's court historian Abul Fazl.
- The Ain is made up of five books (daftars), of which the first three books describe the administration of Akbar's regime. The fourth and fifth books (daftars) deal with the religious, literary, and cultural traditions of the people and also contain a collection of Akbar's 'auspicious sayings'.
- Despite of its limitations, Ain remains an extra ordinary document of that period. Other Sources:

The other sources included revenue records of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and extensive records of the East India Company. All these provided us with useful descriptions of agrarian relations in Eastern India.

During the Mughal period, peasants were called as raiyat and there were two kinds of peasants i.e. Khud-Kashta and Pahi-Kashta.

Khud-Kashta were residents of the village in which they held their lands. Pahi-Kashta were non-resident cultivators who belonged to some other village and cultivated lands on contractual basis.

The constant expansion of agriculture was due to the abundance of land, available labour and the mobility of peasants.

Monsoons remained the backbone of Indian agriculture, but irrigation project (digging new canals and repaired old ones) received state support.

Agriculture was organised around two major seasonal crops, Kharif (autumn) and the rabi (spring) crops.

Agriculture in medieval India was not only for subsistence. Mughal state encouraged peasants to cultivate jins-i-kamil, i.e., perfect crops (cotton, sugar, etc) for better profit.

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- Revenue from the land was the economic mainstay of the Mughal empire.
- The office of the diwan, revenue officials and record keeper all became important for the agricultural domain.
- The land revenue arrangements consisted of two states i.e. first, assessment (jama) and then actual collection (hasil).
- Both cultivated and cultivable lands were measured in each province.
- At the time of Akbar, lands were divided into polaj, parauti, chachar and banjar. The Flow of Silver and its Impact on Economy:

Voyages of discovery and the opening up of the New World resulted in a massive expansion of Asia's, particularly India's trade with Europe.

The expanding trade brought in huge amounts of silver bullion into Asia to pay for goods procured from India and a large part of that bullion gravitated towards India. This was good for India as it did not have natural resources of silver.

As a result, the period between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries was marked by a remarkable stability in the silver currency.

Caste Based Village Communities:

- There were three constituents of village community, the cultivators, the panchayat and the village headman (muqaddam or mandal).
- The cultivators were a highly heterogeneous group. Caste inequalities were there and certain castes were assigned menial tasks and thus faced poverty.
- There was a direct correlation between caste, poverty and social status at the lower strata of society.
- Sometimes castes rose in the hierarchy because of their developing economic conditions.
- In mixed-caste villages the panchayat represented various castes and communities in the village, though village menial-cum-agricultural worker were not included in it.

Panchayat

- The panchayat was headed by a headman known as muqaddam or mandal. Panchayat used their funds for community welfare activities.



- The village headman observed the conduct of the members of village community to prevent any offence against their caste.
- The panchayat had the authority to levy fines and inflict punishment.
- In addition to the village panchayat, each caste or jati in the village had its own jati panchayat. Jati panchayat enjoyed considerable power in rural society.
- In most cases, except in matters of criminal justice, the state respected the decisions of jati panchayats. There were substantial number of artisans in the villages, sometimes it was as high as 25 percent of the total house holds.
- Village artisans like potters, blacksmiths, carpenters, barbers, goldsmiths, etc provided specialized services, in return for which they were compensated by the villagers.
- Some British officials in the 19th century saw the village as a 'little republic' but it was not a sign of rural egalitarianism.

Women

- There was individual ownership of assets and deep inequalities based on caste and gender distinctions. Social and Economic Status of Women in Village Communities:
- Women and men had to work shoulder to shoulder in the agricultural fields.
- Men tilled and ploughed, while women sowed, weeded, threshed and winnowed the harvest. Although biases related to women's biological functions did continue.
- Many artisanal tasks like spinning yarn, sifting and kneading clay for pottery and embroidery were dependent on female labour.
- Women were considered an important resource in agrarian society because they were child bearers in a society dependent on labour.
- Sometimes in rural communities the payment of bride-price, remarriage for both divorced and widowed women were considered legitimate. Women had the right to inherit property.

Zamindars

- Hindu and Muslim women even inherited zamindaris which they were free to sell or mortgage. The Zamindars and their Power:



- The zamindars had extensive personal lands termed milkiyat (property) and enjoyed certain social and economic privileges in rural society.
- The zamindars often collected revenue on behalf of the state.
- Most zamindars had fortresses as well as an armed contingent comprising units of cavalry, artillery and infantry. In this period, the relatively 'lower' castes entered the rank of zamindars as zamindaris were bought and sold quite briskly.
- Although, there can be little doubt that zamindars were an exploitative class, their relationship with the peasantry had an element of reciprocity, paternalism and patronage.

Forests and Tribes:

- Forest dwellers known as 'jangli' were those whose livelihood came from the gathering of forest produce, hunting and shifting agriculture.
- Sometimes the forest was a subversive place, a place of refuge for troublemakers.
- Forest people supplied elephants to the kings.
- Hunting was a favourite activity for the kings, sometimes it enabled the emperor to travel extensively in his empire and personally attended the grievances of his subjects.
- Forest dwellers supplied honey, bees wax, gum lac, etc.
- Like the 'big men' of the village community tribes also had their chieftains.
- Many tribal chiefs had become zamindars, some even became kings.
- Tribes in the Sind region had armies comprising of 6,000 cavalry and 7,000 infantry.

Important Terms:

- Raiyat: It is used to denote a peasant in Indo-Persian sources.
- Hasil: It was the actual amount of revenue collected.
- Khud-kashta Peasants: The peasants who were the residents of the village in which they had their lands.
- Pahi-kashta: The peasants who generally belonged to another village.
- Shroff: A money changer who also acts as a banker.
- Amin: The officials that were responsible for imperial regulations.
- Pargana: An administrative subdivision.



- Jama: The assessed amount and to be collected as revenue.

Time line:

1526 – Babur defeated Ibrahim Lodi at Panipat and became the first Mughal Emperor.

1530-40 – The first phase of Humayun's reign.

1540-55 – Humayun was defeated by Sher Shah and exiled at Safavid court.

1555-1605 – Humayun regains his lost territories.

1556-1605 – Rule of Akbar

1605-1627 – Rule of Jahangir

1628-1658 – Rule of Shah Jahan

1658-1707 – Rule of Aurangzeb

1739 – Nadir Shah attacked India and ransacked Delhi

1761 – In the third battle of Panipat, Ahmad Shah Abdali defeated the Marathas.

1765 – The diwani of Bengal transferred to the East India Company.

1857 – The last Mughal ruler, Bahadur Shah II was deposed by the British and exiled to Rangoon.

Chapter 9 - Kings and Chronicles The Mughal Courts

Chronicles of the Mughal Emperor provides us valuable informations about the institution of Mughal state. These texts clearly depicted the policies of Mughal Empire which they sought to impose on their domain.

- Babur was the founder of Mughal Empire. His grandson, Akbar, was considered as the greatest Mughal Emperor.
- Akbar did not only consolidate his empire but also made it one of the strongest empires of his time.
- Mughal chronicles were written by mostly Mughal courtiers, who mainly focused on the events related to the rulers, their family, the court and wars and the administration.
- Persian was used as the main language.



- Paintings were done on the chronicles to make them attractive.
- Two most important illustrated Mughal official histories were – Akbar Nama and Badshah Nama.
- According to Abu'l Fazl, the Mughal emperor had the responsibility to protect the Jan, Mai, names and din of his subject.
- Shahjahan's daughter Jahanara took part in many architectural planning of new capital of the empire, Shahjahanbad.
- Imperial Kitabkhana were the main centres for the creation of manuscripts. Painters played an important role in the creation of Mughal manuscripts.
- Paper-makers required to prepare folio of manuscripts, calligrapher copied the text, gilders illuminated the pages, painter illustrated the scene from the text, bookbinders collected the individual folios and set them within ornamental covers.
- Akbar Nama has three volumes. Every volume contained information of ten lunar years. Its first two volumes were written by Lahori, which were later on revised by Wazir Sadullah Khan. The third volume is written by wazir, because at that time Lahori became very old and was unable to write.
- Gulbadan Begum wrote Humayun Nama. It gives us a glimpse into the domestic world of Mughals.
- Jharokha darshan was introduced by Akbar. According to the emperor it began his day at sunrise with a few religious prayer and then used to appear in a small balcony, i.e. the Jharokha in East direction. Below, a crowd wanted to have a look of the emperor.
- Court histories of the Mughals were written in Persian language in the 10th /17th centuries came from different parts of the subcontinents and they are now the Indian languages.
- All Mughal government officials held rank with two designation – zat and sawar. In the 17th century, mansabdar of 1,000 Zat or above was ranked as nobles.
- The monarchs of the Mughal Empire considered themselves as legitimate rulers of vast Indian sub-continent. They appointed court historians to write on accounts of their achievements. Modern historians called these texts as chronicles, as they presented a continuous chronological record of events.



The Mughals and Their Empire:

- The name Mughal derives from the term 'Mongol'. The Mughals were descendants of the Turkish ruler Timur on the paternal side. Zahiruddin Babur was related to Ghenghis Khan from his mother's side.
- Babur was driven from Farghana by the warring Uzbeks. First he established himself at Kabul and then in 1526 came to Indian sub-continent.
- Babur's successor, Nasiruddin Humayun (1530-40, 1555-56) expanded the frontiers of the empire, but lost it to the Afghan leader Sher Shah Sur. In 1555, Humayun defeated the Surs, but died a year later.
- Jalaluddin Akbar (1556-1605) was the greatest of all the Mughal emperors. He expanded and consolidated his empire making it the largest, strongest and richest.
- Akbar had three fairly able successors Jahangir (1605-27), Shah Jahan (1628-58) and Aurangzeb (1658-1707). After the death of Aurangzeb (1707), the power of Mughal dynasty diminished.

Different Chronicles of Mughals:

- Chronicles commissioned by the Mughal emperors are an important source for studying the empire and its court.
- The authors of Mughal chronicles were invariably courtiers. The famous chronicles are Akbar Nama, Shahjahan Nama and Alamgir Nama.
- Turkish was the mother tongue of Mughals, but it was Akbar who made Persian the leading language of Mughal court.
- Persian became Indianised by absorbing local idioms. Urdu sprang from the interaction of Persian with Hindavi.
- All books in Mughal India were handwritten manuscripts and were kept in Kitabkhana . i.e. scriptorium.
- The creation of a manuscript involved paper makers, scribes or calligraphers, gilders, painters, bookbinders, etc.
- Akbar's favourite calligraphy style was the nastaliq, a fluid style with long horizontal strokes. Muhammad Husayn of Kashmir was one of the finest calligraphers at Akbar's court who was honoured with the title 'Zarrin Kalam' (Golden pen).

The Paintings of Mughal Period:

- Abu'l Fazl described painting as a 'magical art', but the production of painting was largely criticised by the Ulama, as it was prohibited by the Quran as well as by the 'hadis'.
- Hadis described life event of prophet Muhammad which restricted the deception of living beings as they regarded it as function of God.
- The Safavid kings and the Mughal Emperors patronised the finest artists like Bihzad, Mir Sayyid Ali, Abdus Samad, etc. Historical Text of Mughals: Akbar Nama and the Badshah.Nama:
- The Akbar Nama written by Abu'l Fazl is divided into three books, of which the third one is Ain-i Akbari which provided a detailed description of Akbar's regime.
- The Badshah Nama was written by Abul Hamid Lahori about the reign of Shahjahan. Later, it was revised by Sadullah Khan.
- The Asiatic Society of Bengal founded by Sir William Jones in 1784 undertook the editing, printing and translation of many Indian manuscripts, including Akbar Nama and Badshah Nama.

The Ideal Kingdom of Mughal Empire:

- Iranian Sufi thinker Suhrawardi developed the idea that there was a hierarchy in which the Divine Light was transmitted to the king who then became the source of spiritual guidance for his subjects.
- The Mughal artists, from the 17th century onwards began to portray emperor wearing the haloto symbolise the light of God.
- Abu'l Fazl described the ideal of Sulh-i kul (absolute peace) as the cornerstone of enlightened rule.
- In sulh-i kul all religions and schools of thought had freedom of expression but they did not undermine the authority of the state or fight among themselves.
- Akbar abolished the discriminating pilgrimage tax in 1563 and Jizya in 1564.
- Abu'l Fazl defined sovereignty as a social contract i.e., the emperor protected life, property, honour and faith and in return demanded obedience and a share of resources.

Capitals and Courts of the Mughals:



- The capital cities of the Mughals frequently shifted during the 16th and 17th centuries.
- Babur took over the Lodhi capital of Agra.
- In 1570, Akbar decided to build a new capital, Fatehpur Sikri.
- Akbar commissioned the construction of a white marble tomb for Shaikh Salim Chisthi at Sikri. He also constructed Buland Darwaza here after the victory in Gujarat.
- In 1585 the capital was shifted to Lahore to bring the North-West in control and to watch the frontier.
- In 1648, under the rule of Shah Jahan, the capital was transferred to Shahjahanabad with the Red Fort, the Jama Masjid, the Chandni Chowk and spacious homes for the nobility.
- In Mughal Court, status was determined by spatial proximity to the king.
- Once the emperor sat on the throne, no one was permitted to move from his position without permission.
- The forms of salutation to the ruler indicated the person's status in the hierarchy.
- The emperor began his day at sunrise with personal religious devotions and then appeared on a small balcony, the jharoka for the view (darshan) of his subjects.
- After that the emperor walked to the public hall of audience (Diwan-i-am) to conduct the primary business of his government.
- The Mughal kings celebrated three major festivals in a year i.e. the solar and lunar birthdays of the Monarch and Nauroz, the Iranian New Year on the vernal equinox.
- Grand titles were adopted by the Mughal emperors at the time of coronation or after a victory.
- The titles like Asaf Khan, Mirza Raja were given to the nobles.

Noble women

- Whenever a courtier met with the emperor, he had to offer nazr (a small amount of money) or peshkash (a large amount of money). The Mughal Household:
- The term 'harem' was used to refer to the domestic world of the Mughals.
- The Mughal household consisted of the emperor's wives and concubines, his near and distant relatives (mother, step-and foster-mothers, sisters, daughters, daughters-in-law, aunts, children, etc) and female servants and slaves.



- Polygamy was practised widely by the ruling class.
- Both the Rajputs and the Mughals took marriage as a way at cementing political relationships and forging alliances.
- After Noor Jahan, Mughal queens and princesses began to control significant financial resources.
- The bazaar of Chandni Chowk was designed by Jahanara.
- Gulbadan Begum, daughter of Babur wrote 'Humayun Nama' which was considered as an important source of Mughal Empire. The Officials in Mughal Administration:

Nobility

- In Mughal period, the nobility was recruited from diverse ethnic and religious group. In Akbar's imperial service Turani and Iranian nobles played a dominant role.
- Two ruling groups of Indian origin, the Rajputs and the Indian Muslims (Shaikhzadas) entered the imperial service from 1560 onwards.
- The emperor personally reviewed changes in rank, titles and official postings.
- Akbar designed mansab system which established spiritual relationships with a select band of his nobility by treating them as his disciples.
- Some important officials were Mir Bakshi (paymaster general), Diwan-i ala (Finance minister) and sadr-us-sudur (minister of grants and incharge of appointing local judges or qazis), etc. The keeping of exact and detailed rewards was a major concern of the Mughal administration.
- The Mir Bakshi supervised the corps of court writers who recorded all applications and documents of courts.

News reports and important official documents travelled across the Mughal Empire by imperial post which included round-the-clock relays of foot-runners (qasid or pathmar) carried papers rolled up in bamboo containers.

Division of Functions

- The division of functions established at the centre was replicated in the provinces (subas),
- The local administration was looked after the level of the paragana by three semi-hereditary officers, the qanungo (keeper of revenue records), the chaudhuri (incharge of revenue collection) and the qazi.



- Persian language was made the language of administration throughout, but local languages were used for village accounts. Jesuit Missionaries in the Mughal Court:
- Mughal Emperors assumed many titles like Shahenshah, Jahangir, Shah Jahan, etc,

Conquest

- All conquerors who sought to make their way into the Indian sub-continent had to cross the Hindukush mountains. Thus, the Mughal tried to ward off this potential danger, and tried to control Kabul and Qandahar.
- Europe got knowledge of India through the accounts of Jesuit missionaries, travellers, merchants and diplomats.
- Akbar was curious about Christianity and the first Jesuit mission reached the Mughal Court at Fatehpur Sikri in 1580.
- The Jesuit accounts are based on personal observation and shed light on the character and mind of the emperor. Akbar's Quest for Religion:
- Akbar's quest for religions knowledge led to interfaith debates in the Ibadat Khana at Fatehpur Sikri, between learned Muslims, Hindus, Jainas, Parsis and Christians.
- Increasingly, Akbar moved away from the orthodox Islamic ways of understanding religions towards a self-conceived eclectic form of divine worship focused on light and sun.
- Akbar and Abu'l Fazl tried to create a philosophy of light and used it to shape the image of the king and ideology of the state. King was a divinely inspired individual who had supreme sovereignty over his people and complete control over his enemies.
- With these liberal ideas, the Mughal rulers could effectively controlled the heterogeneous population of Indian sub-continent for a century and a half.

Important terms:

- Chronicles: It is a continuous chronological record of events.
- Manuscript: The handwritten records.
- Divine theory of kingship: The king was believed as the representative of god, acquired his powers from him and therefore had to be obeyed.
- Sulh-i-kul: It is state policy of religious tolerance.
- Jizya: A tax imposed on non-muslims in lieu of military service.



- Mansabdar: All royal officers were known as mansabdars.
- Chahar taslim: A form of salutation to the emperor which is done four times.
- Tajwiz: A petition presented to the emperor by a nobleman recommending an application to the post of a mansabdar.

Time line:

1526 – Babur established Mughal dynasty in India.

1530 – Humayun succeeds the Mughal throne.

1556 – After the second battle of Panipat Akbar succeeds to the throne.

1563 – Akbar abolished the pilgrimage tax.

1585 – Akbar shifted his capital from Fatehpur Sikri to Lahore.

1589 – Babur Nama was translated in Persian and Abu'l Fazl wrote the Akbar Nama.

1605-22 – Jahangir wrote Jahangir Nama.

1648 – Shahjahanabad became the new capital of the Mughal Empire.

1668 – Alamgir Nama was written by Muhammad Kazim. It gives a historical account of the first decade of Aurangzeb's rule.

1707 – Aurangzeb died.

1857 – The last ruler of the Mughal dynasty was overthrown by the British.

Chapter 10 - Colonialism and the Countryside: Exploring Official Archives

- In India British rule was first of all established in Bengal.
- Permanent settlement of land revenue was adopted in Bengal in 1793.
- The economic measure adopted by the British government made India a consumer of goods manufactured in England.
- By the end of the 18th century when zamindars were facing a crisis, A group of such peasants, on other hand, was consolidating their position in the villages.

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- With the emergence of the power of zamindars had considerably diminished. They did not surrender easily. So they devised many ways to withstand the pressure and keep their central focus on their zamindaris.
- At the end of 18th century, the most adverse effect of the colonial rule fell on the economic condition of the peasants.
- As a result of the British occupation of India the Indian economy faced disastrous consequences. To fulfil their vested interests, they shattered their tradition and structure of Indian economy.
- Because of the decline of Indian industry, Indian weavers and craftswoman were completely made jobless. The industries in Surat, Dhaka, Murshidaabad, etc which were once flourishing were destroyed.

Historians like Percival Spear, P.E. Robat and R.C. Dutt have praised permanent settlement of land revenue, because

- Government Income became stable
- Administration became efficient
- British rule got stable.
- Permanent settlement of Revenue was also criticised on the basis of—
- It did not proved beneficial for Zamindars.
- It ingrained the interest of cultivators.
- Burden of taxes fell on other classes.
- Mahalwari system of land revenue was implemented in Punjab. The group of villages were called 'Mahal'. So the system was known as Mahalwari system.
- The objective of the Fifth Report was to restrain and control the activities of East India company in India.
- The East India Company of England established its control in the countryside and implemented its revenue policies. In this chapter, we will discuss what these policies meant to people and how these changed the daily lives of people.

Bengal and the Zamindars:

- Colonial rule was first established in Bengal. In Bengal, East India Company tried to reorder the rural society and establish new land rights and new revenue system.
- There was an auction held at Burdwan (present day Bardhaman) in 1797, which was popularly known as Grand Public Event.



- Company fixed the revenue and each zamindar was supposed to pay. This fixing of revenue was done under the Permanent Settlement and it became operational from year 1793.
- The Zamindars who failed to pay the revenue, their estate was auctioned to recover the revenue. But sometimes it was found that the purchasers at auction were servants and agents of the zamindar himself, e.g. auction in Burdwan.

The Problem of Unpaid Revenue:

- The British officials felt that agriculture, trade and the revenue resources of the state could be developed by encouraging investment in agriculture. This could be done by securing rights of property and permanently fixing the rates of revenue demand.
- Company felt that when revenue will be fixed, it will provide opportunity to individual to invest in agriculture as a means of making profit and company will also be assured of regular flow of revenue.
- After a prolonged debate amongst company officials, the permanent settlement was made with the rajas and taluqdars of Bengal.
- Zamindars had several, sometimes even 400 villages under them.
- Zamindars collected rent from the different villages, paid the revenue to the company, and retained the difference as his income. Reasons for Non-Payment by Zamindars:
- A number of reasons were responsible for non-repayment of revenue by zamindars which include that revenue demands were kept very high. It was imposed at a time when prices of agricultural produce was very low, so peasants found it difficult to pay.
- Zamindars were also treated by strict laws i.e. the Sunset Law', which was completely regardless of the harvest. According to this law, zamindars had to pay revenue by sunset of the specified date, otherwise zamindari was liable to be auctioned.
- Besides these, permanent settlement and company reduced the power of Zamindars. Sometimes ryots and village headman-jotedar deliberately delayed the payments.

Limitations Imposed on Zamindars by the Company:



- Zamindars were important for the company but it also wanted to control and regulate them, subdue their authority and restrict their autonomy.
- Thus, the zamindars' troops were disbanded, customs duties abolished and their 'cutcheries' (courts) brought under the supervision of a collector appointed by the company.
- Zamindars lost their power to organise local justice and local police.
- Over time zamindars were severely restricted and their powers were seized. The Rise of The Jotedars in Villages:
- The group of prosperous farmers were popularly known as jotedars. Jotedars were a class of rich peasants.
- They acquired vast areas of land, controlled trade, money lending and exercise immense- power over the poorer cultivators. Their land was cultivated through share cropper known as adhiyars or bargadars.
- Within village the power of jotedars was more effective than that of Zamindars. They fiercely resisted the efforts of Jama to increase the Jama of village and prevented zamindari official from executing their duties.
- Sometimes they also purchased the auctioned property of zamindar. Joiedar played an important role in weakening of zamindari system. The Resistance of the Zamindars:
- To prevent the weakening of their authority, zamindar took series of steps-like fictitious sale or transferring of property to female- member of family, manipulated the auctions, withholding revenue deliberately, threatening or intimidating the people outside their zamindari, if they try to bought an estate.

The Fifth Report and its Impact on Zamindars:

- It was the fifth of a series of report on administration and activities of East India Company in India. It was submitted to the British Parliament in 1813.
- British Parliament forced the company to produce regular report on the administration of India and appointed committees to enquire into the affairs of the company. It became the basis of intense parliamentary debates on the nature of East India Company's rule in India.
- Fifth report has shaped our conception of what happened in rural Bengal during that period and evidence contained in the 5th report are very important.



The Accounts of Buchanan:

- Francis Buchanan undertook detailed surveys of the areas under the jurisdiction of the British East India Company.
- Buchanan journey was sponsored by the company and it was planned according to its need. He had specific instruction about what he had to look for and what he had to record.
- Buchanan observed the stones, rocks, different layers of soil, minerals, and stones that were commercially valuable.
- Buchanan wrote about landscape and how these landscapes could be transformed and made productive.
- His assessments were shaped by commercial interest of the company and modern western notions of what constituted progress. He was critical of lifestyle of forest dwellers.

Pastoral Areas of Bengal:

With gradual passage of time, settled cultivation expanded and reached to the area of shifting cultivation, swallowing up pasture and forest in the Rajmahal hills. Shifting cultivation was done with the help of hoe, while settled cultivation was done through plough.

In the Hills of Rajmahal:

Francis Buchanan, a physician travelled through Rajmahal hills and he gave an account about it.

Originally in the Rajmahal hills Paharias lived. They lived on hunting, shifting cultivation, food gathering and was intimately connected to forest.

In last decade of 18th century British encouraged forest clearance and zamindar and jotedar also started to turn uncultivated land into rice fields. As settled agriculture expanded, the area under forest and pasture contracted. This sharpened the conflict between Paharias and settled cultivators.

Around 1780, Santhal came into these areas. They cleared the forest and ploughed land.

As the lower hills were takenover by the Santhal Settlers, the Paharias receded interior into the Rajmahal hills. The Santhals became Settlers:

Zamindars and Britishers after having failed to subdue the Paharias and transform them into settled cultivators turned to Santhals. The



Santhal appeared to be ideal settlers, cleared the forest and ploughed land.

After land was granted, population of Santhals increased exponentially and their villages also increased in number.

When the Santhal were settling, the Paharias resisted but were ultimately forced to withdraw deeper into hills. It impoverished the Paharias in the long term.

Santhals now lived a settled life, cultivated a range of commercial crops for market and dealt with traders, moneylenders. But state was taxing them heavily, moneylenders (dikus) were charging high interest rate and taking over their land when debts remained unpaid and zamindars were asserting control over their land. Later due to problems, Santhal revolted in year 1855-1856, and to pacify them, Britishers carved out new areas for the Santhals and imposed some special laws within it.

The Revolt in Bombay Deccan:

One of the way to explore what was happening in the area of Bombay Deccan is to focus on the revolt of that area. Rebels expressed their anger and fury.

Revolt provide information about life of peasant, event associated with revolt, suppress or control of the revolt. Enquiries about the revolt produced result that can be explored by Historians.

Through the nineteenth century, peasants in various parts of India rose in revolt against money lenders and grain dealers, e.g. the revolt occurred in 1875 in the Deccan.

A movement began at Supa Village in Poona in 1895, where ryots from surrounding rural areas gathered and attacked the Shopkeepers and demanded their bahi khatas (account book) and debt bonds. Ryots burnt the Khatas, looted shop and in few instances burnt the house of Sahukars.

Later revolt spread from Pune to Ahmednagar and even further terrified Sahukars fled the village leaving behind their property and belonging.

British officials controlled these revolts, they established police post in villages and arrested people and convicted them. A New Revenue System Started:



In the 19th century, the British company was keen to expand its financial resources in its annexed territories through other temporary revenue settlement policies.

This was so, because after 1810, the agricultural prices rose and enlarged the income of the Bengal zamindars but not the company. This was due to the Permanent Settlement policy in which the revenue demand was fixed and could not be hiked. Therefore to expand its revenue source, company started to introduce temporary settlement.

Policies of officials were also shaped by the economic theories they are familiar with. In 1820's, officials were under influence of Ricardian ideas. David Ricardo was a celebrated Economist in England.

Ricardian idea states that landowner should claim only to average rent and when there is surplus, state should tax that surplus. He further says if tax will not be levied cultivators will likely to turn into rentiers and surplus income will not be productively invested in improvement of land.

Ryotwari settlement was introduced in Bombay Deccan as a new revenue system. In this system, revenue was directly settled with cultivator or ryot. Average income from soil, revenue paying capacity of ryot was assessed and proportion of it was fixed as share of the state. In this system, there was provision for resurvey of land every 30 years.

Revenue Demand and Peasant Debt:

Revenue demand was very high and when harvest were poor, it was impossible to pay. When peasant failed to pay revenue his crops were seized and fine was imposed on the whole village. In 1830's, prices fell sharply, famine struck and due to this 1/3rd of cattle in deccan were killed and half of human population died. So the problem became very severe, but the unpaid revenue mounted. In these conditions many peasants deserted their village and migrated to new places.

To get over a troubled period, to purchase things for arrange marriages and to start agriculture, peasant needed money. So they borrowed money from moneylender. But once loan was taken, they were unable to pay it back. As debt mounted and loan remained unpaid, peasant dependence on moneylender increased.



By 1840's, officials found that peasants were in alarming level of indebtedness, so they moderated the revenue demand slightly. By 1845, agricultural price recovered steadily and peasants started expanding cultivation. But for the purpose of expansion they needed money to buy seeds etc, so they again turned to moneylender for money.

The Experience of Injustice of the Peasants:

Peasants got deeper and deeper into debt and now they were utterly dependent on moneylender for survival but now moneylenders were refusing their loan. Along with this, there was customary rule that interest charged cannot be more than principal amount of loan. But in colonial rule this law was broken and now ryots started to see money lenders as devious and deceitful. They complained of moneylenders manipulating laws and forging accounts.

To tackle this problem, British in 1859 passed Limitation Law that stated that loan bond would have validity for 3 years only.

It was meant to check accumulation of interest. But moneylenders now forced ryot to sign a new bound every 3 years in which total unpaid balance of last loan was entered as principal amount and interest was charged on it.

In petitions to Deccan Riots commission, ryots

stated how moneylenders were suppressing and oppressing them by refusing to give receipts when loan were paid back, entered fictitious figures in bond and forced them to sign and put thumb impression on bonds or document about which they had no idea and they were not able to read. Money lenders also acquired the harvest at low price and ultimately took over property of peasant. They have no choice because to survive they needed loan but moneylenders were not willing to give it without bonds. The Deccan Riot's Commission and its Report:

The Government of Bombay set up a Commission to investigate a riot in Deccan. The Commission held enquirers in district where riot spread, recorded statements of ryots, sahuikars and eyewitnesses, compiled data on revenue rate, interest rate in different regions and collated reports sent by district collectors. Report of Commission was tabled in British Parliament in 1878.

This report reflected the official thinking of colonial government. It came to one of the conclusion that peasants were angered by

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moneylenders, not by revenue demand of the company. It shows that the colonial government was reluctant to admit that popular discontent was against the governments action. Official reports are the invaluable source of reconstruction of history but they need to juxtaposed with other evidences also.

Cotton and its Global Condition:

The American civil war broke in 1861. Due to war, cotton export to Britain decreased very much. To reduce dependence on America, cotton cultivation was promoted in India.

Export merchants gave money to urban sahuks who in turn gave to rural moneylenders to secure the produce. So now the peasant had access to money easily and due to this, cotton production increased rapidly. But this brought prosperity to rich peasants mostly and for small peasants it led to heavier debt. By 1862 over 90 percent of cotton imports into Britain were coming from India.

When in 1865 civil war ended, export of cotton resumed, prices of cotton and demand of cotton from India decreased. Thus merchants, sahuks and moneylenders were not extending credit to peasants, instead they demanded repayment of debts. At the same time revenue demand was also increased from 50 to 100 percent.

Important terms:

- Mahals: Estates owned by big zamindars who were called Raja locally.
- Raja: It is the term for Monarch but often refers to the big Zamindars in their respective local areas.
- Taluqdars: The owners of Taluq, taluq stood for piece of land or territorial unit.
- Ryots: Ryots means peasants.
- Jotedars: Rich peasants often owning large farmlands. They often controlled moneylending and trade at local levels. Sometimes village headman was also called Jotedar.
- Zamindar: The chain between farmer and the company in the system called permanent settlement. Zaminadars were responsible for collection of land revenue and depositing the same to the Company. They lived life of comfort and luxury.
- Amla: Official of Zamindar who would maintain record and collect revenue from villages.



- Benami: the literal meaning is anonymous. The term was to denote transactions wherein real person was hidden behind insignificant name or person.
- Lathi at: The musclemen of Zamindars.
- Sahukar: Trader who was also in money lending business.
- Rentier: A person who lived on rental income.
- Dewani: The Revenue department of state.
- Permanent Settlement: Land revenue system introduced by Cornwallis in 1793 in Bengal. Under this system, the land revenue was collected by Zamindars. Zamindari rights passed on father to son.
- Ryotwari System: The land revenue system introduced in Madras and Bombay Presidencies. Under the system, settlement was made directly with cultivators.

Time line:

1765 – East India Company got diwani right for the province of Bengal, in the wake of Battle of Buxar.

1773 – Regulating act enacted by the British Parliament aimed at controlling the East India Company.

1800's – Santhals began to settle in the hills of Rajmahal.

1818 – First land revenue settlement done in the Bombay Presidency.

1820's – Prices of agriculture produce decline.

1855-56 – Santhals rebel in Rajmahal.

1861 – Cotton boom for the Indian cultivators, in the wake of American civil war

1875 – Ryots in Deccan villages rebel.

Chapter 11 - Rebels and the Raj The Revolt of 1857 and its Representations

Since the mid-18th century, Nawabs and Rajas had gradually lost their power and authority. Their freedom was curtailed, their armed forces were disbanded and their revenues and territories were taken away.



- Many ruling families such as Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi tried to negotiate with the company to protect their interest but they did not get success.
- Now the company began to plan to bring an end to the Mughal Dynasty. To make this plan successful the company took several measures.
- The name of the Mughal king was removed from the coins minted by the Company.
- In 1849, it was announced that after the death of Bahadur Shah Zafar, the family of the king would be shifted out of the Red Fort and given another place in Delhi to reside in.
- In 1856, the Company decided that Bahadur Shah Zafar would be the last Mughal king, and after his death his descendants would be called princes.
- In the countryside peasants and zamindars resented the high taxes and the rigid methods of revenue collection.
- The Indian sepoys were unhappy about their pay, allowances and condition of service. Some of the Company's rules even violated their religious sentiments. Thus, everywhere there spread discontentment.
- The responses to the reforms brought in the Indian society by the British were also not positive, although some reforms were essential.
- The Company passed laws to stop the practice of sati.
- English-language education was promoted.
- In 1850, a new law was passed to make conversion to Christianity easier.
- Some Indians thought that the British were destroying their religion and their social customs while some wanted to change existing social practices.
- By and by the people began to view the British as their common enemy and therefore they rose up against this enemy at the same time.

Rebellion:

- In May, 1857 a massive rebellion started that threatened the company's very existence in India.
- Sepoy mutinied in several places beginning from Meerut and a large number of people from different sections of society rose up in rebellion.
- On 29 March 1857, Mangal Pandey, a young soldier, was hanged to death for attacking his officers in Barrackpore. This was too much for the sepoys. They refused to do the army



drill using the new cartridges, which were suspected of being coated with the fat of cows and pigs. Thus, tension grew between the Company and sepoys.

- The sepoys were determined to bring an end to the Company's rule. From Meerut they rushed to Delhi.
- As the news of their arrival spread, the regiments stationed in Delhi also rose up in rebellion. They killed several British officers, seized arms and ammunitions, set buildings on fire.
- They met the Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar and proclaimed him as their leader.
- The Mughal Emperor got support from the rulers and chiefs of the country and together they rose against the British power.
- After the British were routed from Delhi, there was no uprising for a few days. Then, a spurt of mutiny began.
- Regiment after regiment mutinied and took off to join other troops at nodal points like Delhi, Kanpur and Lucknow. After them, the people of the towns and villages also rose up in rebellion and rallied around local leaders, zamindars and chiefs who were prepared to fight the British. Thus, a widespread revolt shook the British confidence over ruling India.
- The Company had no way out except suppressing the revolt with all its might. It brought reinforcement from England, passed new laws so that the rebels could be convicted with ease, and then moved into the storm centres of the revolt.
- The Company recaptured Delhi from the rebel forces in September 1857. Bahadur Shah Zafar was tried in court and sentenced to life imprisonment. He along with his wife were sent to prison in Rangoon.
- But people in other areas still continued to resist and fought with the British. The British had to fight for two years to suppress the massive forces of mass rebellion.
- The British had regained control of the country by the end of 1859 but they could not carry on ruling the land with the same policies anymore.
- The British Parliament passed a new Act in 1858 and transferred the powers of the East India Company to the British Crown in order to ensure a more responsible management of Indian affairs.
- The Governor-General of India was given the title of Viceroy, that is, a personal representative of the Crown. In this way



the British government took direct responsibility for ruling India.

- All ruling chiefs of the country were allowed to pass on their kingdoms to their heirs, including adopted sons. However, they were made to acknowledge the British Queen as their Sovereign Paramount.
- Revolt started with an outbreak of mutiny in Meerut on 10th May, 1857. After taking over the local administration, sepoys along with people of surrounding village marched to Delhi. They wanted the support of Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah. Sepoys came to Red Fort and demanded that the emperor give them his blessings. Bahadur Shah had no option but to support them.

Revolt of 1857:

Sepoys' started revolt by capturing the arms from stores and plundering the treasury, afterward they attacked and ransack all government offices like jail, treasury-, telegraph office, record room, bungalows etc. Proclamations in Hindi, Urdu and Persian were put up calling local to join them and exterminate the foreign rule. When ordinary people joined sepoys, mutiny changed to revolt, the targets of attack widened.

During the revolt in towns like Lucknow, Kanpur and Bareilly, the rich people and moneylenders were also attacked and property were looted, as they were seen as allies of British and they also oppressed the peasants in the recent past.

Ways of Communication during Revolt:

- There have been evidences of communication among the sepoys of different regiments before and during the revolt. Their emissaries moved from one station to other.
- Sepoys or Historians have said, panchayats were there and these were composed of native officers drawn from each regiments. Some of the decisions were taken collectively by these panchayats. Sepoys shared a common lifestyle and many of them came from the same caste, so they sat together and made their own rebellion.

Famous Leaders and Followers of Revolt:

To fight the British, leadership and organisation were necessary. For leadership, rebels turned to those rulers to whom British has



overthrown. Most of these displaced rulers joined the revolt due to pressure of locals or due to their own zeal.

- At some places religious leaders also took the leadership and inspired people to fight like fakir in Meerut and religious leaders in Lucknow who preached destruction of British rule.
- Local leader like Shah Mai in Barout, Uttar Pradesh, and Gonoo, a tribal leader of Kol tribals in singhbhum mobilised the communities for revolt. The Role Played by Rumours and Prophecies in Revolt:
- Rumours and prophecies played an important role in outbreak of mutiny and revolt. There was rumour about the cartridge of Enfield rifle coated with fat of cow and pigs and mixing of bone, dust with atta.
- Both these rumours were believed and it was thought that it would corrupt the religion and caste of both Hindus and Muslims.
- There was a fear and suspicion that British wanted Indians to convert them to Christianity.
- There was also prophecy in the air that British rule would come to an end on the centenary of Battle of Plassey on 23rd June, 1857. So, these rumours and prophecies provided important psychological reasons to revolt against the British rule.

Reasons to Believe in Rumours

- In the preceding years of 1857, many things were introduced by British which were new to Indian society and they were believed to be aimed at reforming Indian society like introduction of Western education, Western ideas, institutions, schools, colleges and universities.
- British formed new laws banning the Sati system and to allow widow remarriage. In 1850s, British annexed states like Avadh, Jhansi and Satara by refusing adoption and on the basis of misgovernment. New land laws and revenue settlements were made.
- These all above factors made Indians believe that British is changing the way of their life, custom, rules and replacing them with alien customs and rule.
- Suspicion was further aggravated with rapid spread of Christian missionaries and their activities. Revolt in Awadh:
- Lord Dalhousie describe the Kingdom of Awadh as a Cherry that will drop into our mouth one day'.



- Lord Wellesley introduced subsidiary alliance in Awadh in 1801. Gradually, the British developed more interest in the kingdom of Awadh.

The British were looking at role of Awadh as producer of cotton and indigo and also as principal market of upper India. .

By the 1850's, British conquered all major areas of India like the Maratha lands, the Doab, the Carnatic, the Punjab and Bengal. The annexation of Awadh in 1856 completed the territorial annexation which started a century earlier with the annexation of Bengal.

Dalhousie displaced Nawab Wazid Ali Shah and exiled to Calcutta on plea that Awadh is being misgoverned.

British government wrongly assume that Nawab Wazid Ali was an unpopular ruler. On the contrary, he w'as widely loved and people bemoaned for the loss of Nawab.

The removal of Nawab led to dissolution of courts and decline of culture. Musicians, dancers, poets, cooks, retainers and administrative officials, all lost their livelihood.

British Raj and the End of o War:

- With removal of Nawab all taluqdar of the Awadh were also disposed. They were disarmed and their forts were destroyed. With a new revenue system named Summary Settlement, taluqdar lost their very large share of revenue ; from land.
- Wherever possible, taluqdars were removed and settlement was done directly with peasants. This dispossession of taluqdar meant the complete break down of social order.
- Company directly settled revenue with peasants and revenue now was over assessed, so peasants were troubled.
- There was no longer any guarantee that in times of hardship or crop failure the revenue demand of the state would be reduced or the peasant would get the loan and support during festivals which they earlier used to get from taluqdar.
- Earlier, British officials had friendly relations with Indian sepoys but later Indian sepoys were subjected to racial abuse, low pay scale, difference in service.
- In 1840s, English officer developed a sense of superiority, physical violence also started and distance between officers and sepoys grew.



- As many Indian serving in Army were from Awadh, i.e. so local people of Awadh were also aware of unfair behaviour meted out to their brothers.
- Peasants of Awadh were already in trouble because of high revenue and taluqdar were looking for revenge to gain back their authority.
- All these factors cumulatively led to intense participation of people of Awadh in revolt of 1857. Demands of Rebels:
- During the revolt only few proclamations and 'ishtahars' (notification) were issued by rebel leader to propagate their ideas and persuade people to join the revolt.
- So it is very difficult to reconstruct what happened in 1857 and what were the demands of rebels. The only way to know in detail about revolt of 1857 is by going through details of British officials and to know their point of view.
- Proclamation issued by rebel leader appealed to all sections of the population irrespective of cast and creed. The rebellion was seen as a war in which both Hindus and Muslims were equally to lose or gain.

It was remarkable that during uprising, religious division between Hindus and Muslims was hardly noticeable despite the attempt of British government.

Rebels Against the Oppression:

- British rule ruined the status of peasants, artisans and weavers. There was a sense of fear and suspicion that British were determined to destroy the caste and religion of Hindus and Muslims and convert them to Christianity.
- Proclamation were issued which urged people to come together to save their livelihood, faith, identity and completely reject the things associated with firangi raj.
- During the revolt, rebellion attacked all the symbols and office of British government. Rebellion even targeted the allies of British government, ransacked moneylenders property and burnt account books.
- All the activities reflected an attempt of rebels to overturn traditional hierarchies and rebel against all oppression. The Search of Alternative Power:
- Rebels tried to establish pre-British world of 18th century during the revolt.



- They tried to set up whole administrative machinery on one hand to carry out day to day activities during the war and on the other hand they tried to plan how to fight with British.

Repression by the British:

- To reconquer North India, British passed series of law. Whole North India was put under martial law, military officers and ordinary Britons were given power to punish Indian suspected of rebellion.
- Britain government brought reinforcement from Britain and arranged double pronged strategy to capture Delhi. Delhi was captured in late September only.
- British government faced very stiff resistance in the Awadh and they had to use military power at gigantic scale.
- In Awadh, they tried to break unity between landlords and peasants by offering their land back to landlords. Rebel landlords were dispossessed and loyals were rewarded.

Description of Revolt through Art and Literature:

There are very few records on the rebels point of view. Most of the narratives of about 1857 revolt were obtained from official account.

British officials obviously left their version in diaries, letters, autobiographies and official histories and reports.

The stories of the revolt that were published in British newspaper and magazines narrated in detail about the violence of the mutineers and these stories inflamed public feelings and provoked demand for retribution and revenge.

Paintings, etchings, posters, cartoons, bazaar prints produced by British and Indian also served as important record of revolt.

Many pictures were drawn by the British painters to offer variety of images for different events during the revolt. These images provoked a range of different emotions and reactions.

Painting like 'Relief of Lucknow' painted by Thomas Jones Barker in 1859 commemorate the British heroes who saved the english and repressed the rebels.

The Honour of English Women:

Newspaper reports shape the feelings and attitudes of events inflamed particularly by tale of violence against women and



children. There was public demands in Britain for revenge and retribution.

The British government was asked to protect the honour of innocent women and ensure safety of helpless children.

Artists expressed as well as shaped these sentiments through their visual representations of trauma and suffering.

Painting 'In Memoriam' painted by Joseph Noel Paton in 1859 depicted the anxious moment in which women and children huddled in a circle looking helpless and innocent, seemingly waiting for the inevitable dishonour, violence and death. Painting stirs up the imagination and seek to provoke anger and fury. These paintings represent rebels as violent and brutish

Feeling of Revenge among Rebels:

- As news about severeness of revolt spread, there was great anger, shock and demand of retribution, severe repression and grew louder.
- Threatened by the rebellion, the British felt that they had to demonstrate their invincibility. There were innumerable pictures and cartoons in British press that sanctioned brutal repression and violent reprisal.
- Rebels were executed publicly, blown from cannon or hanged from gallows. There were mass execution. To instill a sense of fear among the people, most of these punishments were given in public.
- Governor General Canning declared that gesture of leniency and show of mercy would help in winning back the loyalty of sepoys. At that time, there was voice for revenge and idea of Canning was mocked.

Nationalist Imageries of the Revolt:

- Revolt of 1857 was celebrated as first war of Independence. National movement in 20th century drew its inspiration from the events of 1857.
- Art, literature, history, stories, paintings, films have helped in keeping the memory of 1857 revolt alive.
- The leaders of the revolt were presented as heroic figure leading country into battle, rousing the people to righteous indignation against oppressive imperial rule.
- Nationalist imageries of the revolt had helped to shape the nationalist imagination.

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Important Terms:

- Bell of arms: Store for weapons.
- Firangi: a word of Persian origin, meant white skinned foreigner.
- Mutiny: Rebellion by soldiers.
- Revolt: Mass uprising by people against ruler.
- Enfield Rifle: Whose cartridge was greased with the fat of cow and pig, that infuriated Hindus and Moslems alike.
- Resident: The representative of the East India Company to the native kings, located at the latter's capital.
- Subsidiary Alliance: A treaty that made native kingdoms dependent on the company for military power. It was brought by Lord Wellesely.

Time line:

1849 – Governor General Lord Dalhousie announced that after the death of Bahadur Shah Zafar, the family of the king would be shifted out of the Red Fort and given another place in Delhi to reside in.

1856 – (i) Governor-General Canning decided that Bahadur Shah Zafar would be the last Mughal king and after his death his descendants would be recognised as princes.

(ii) The Company passed a new law which stated that every new person who took up employment in the Company's army had to agree to serve overseas if required.

29 Mar, 1857 – Mangal Pandey, a young soldier, was hanged to death for attacking his officer in Barrackpore.

May, 1857 – Sepoys mutinied in several places.

10 May, 1857 – Sepoys rushed to Delhi from Meerut.

Sep, 1857 – Delhi was recaptured from the rebel forces.

Oct, 1858 – Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar along with his wife was sent to prison in Rangoon.

1858 – A new Act passed by the British Parliament transferred the power of the East India Company to the British Crown.

Nov, 1862 – Bahadur Shah Zafar died in the jail of Rangoon.



Chapter 12 - Colonial Cities Urbanisation, Planning and Architecture

With the decline to the Mughal Empire in the 18th century, many old lords lost their importance.

- 18th century marks the emergences of many new kingdoms like Lucknow, Hyderabad, Poona, Baroda, Nagpur, etc,
- The port towns/cities swat, Masulipatnam, and Dhaka which developed in the 17th century declined during the mid 18th century with the emergence of new cities like Madras, Calcutta and Bombay.
- The colonial rule was based on many kinds of data and compilation of information. Its purpose was to keep an eye on the city life and trading activities so the statistical data, maps, census and official records of municipalities were prepared.
- The survey of India was constituted in 1878 to prepare the survey map of India.
- Railway was introduced in India in 1853. The introduction of railway brought many changes in the life of urban life.
- In the 19th century East India Company established many stations likes, Shimla, Mount Abu and Darjeeling. These hill stations were set up for stationing army, for guarding frontiers and for launching invasion against enemy.
- In 1864, the Viceray John Lahilence, officially shifted his capital at 'Shimla' and the official residence of the commander-in-chief was also set up in Shimla.
- The social life of new cities was bewildering. It had rich and poorest of the poor people.
- The development in the means of the transportation brought many new changes in the social life of the people.
- The importance of middle class began to increase in new cities. Here, they got many new job opportunities which brought a great change in their perception and outlook.
- New identities and new social groups came into existence in these towns.
- Many new changes occurred in the life of the people. Important changes were witnessed in the lives of the woman living in the cities. Here they got many new opportunities of job, which brought new changes in their perception and outlook.



- The British East India company had first set up its trading activities in Surat.
- The Buildings and architectural style threw an invaluable light at many things and provided us an important information about the ideal building.
- These buildings also explain the perspective and viewpoints of those who constructed these building.
- Architectural style do not represent and reflect the prevalent taste. It moulded tastes, popularised styles, shapes, contours of cultures.

Company agents initially settled in the Madras, Calcutta and Bombay which were originally fishing and weaving villages. They gradually developed these villages into the cities. These cities had the mark of colonial government institutions which were set up to regulate economic activity and demonstrate the authority of new rule.

Towns and Cities in Pre-colonial Times:

- Towns and cities before the advent of the British can be discussed under the following heads Nature of Towns:
- Towns represent unique form of economic activities and cultures. In town ruler administrator, artisans, inansabdars and jagirdars, traders, etc were living. Towns were surrounded by the fortified wall and thrived on the surplus and taxes derived from agriculture.
- Peasants from the countryside came to the town for pilgrimage or selling their produce during the lime of famine etc. There are also evidences of people going to village to sell their goods, crafts etc. People migrated to villages when towns were attacked.

The presence of emperor, nobels and other affluent powerful persons in town and centres meant that a wide variety of service had to be provided and these towns were seat of power from where administration of empire works. In the medieval times, Delhi, Agra, Lahore, Madurai and Kanchipuram etc were famous, towns and cities.

Changes in the 18th Century:

In the 18th century with decline of Mughal empire, old towns also lost their grandeur and new towns like Lucknow, Hyderabad, Seringpatnam, Pune, Nagpur, Baroda, Tanjore, etc were developed



and these towns were seat of local authority. Traders, artisans, administrators and mercenaries migrated from old Mughal centres to these towns in search of work and patronage. Many new qasbah (small town in the country side) and garij (small fixed market) came into existence, but effect of political decentralisation were uneven (Puducherry).

European commercial companies had set up their base in different towns, e.g., Portuguese in Panji, Dutch in Masulipatnam, British in Madras and French in Pondicherry.

With expansion in commercial activity towns grew further, gradually by the end of 18th century land-based empires in Asia were replaced by the powerful sea-based European empires. Forces of international trade, mercantilism and capitalism defined the nature of society.

As British took over political control in India from 1757, trade of East India Company expanded and colonial port cities like Bombay, Calcutta and Madras emerged as economic and political power.

Development of Town and Cities in Colonial Times:

A number of records and data were collected by the British as well as Indian officials which provide information about the colonial cities. However, according to historians, the figures can be misleading, some may have correct information and some may have ambiguity.

Colonial Records of Urban History:

British government kept detailed records, carried regular survey, gathered statistical data and published official records of their trading activities to regulate their commercial affairs. British also started mapping as they believed maps help in understanding landscape topography, planning development, maintaining security and to gauge possibilities of commercial activities.

British government from late nineteenth century started giving responsibilities to elect Indian representatives to administrate basic services to towns and it started a systematic annual collection of municipal taxes.

First all-India census was carried in 1872 and after 1881 it was carried decennial (conducted every ten years). But the data record generated and kept by British government cannot be trusted blindly



as it has ambiguities. People during that time gave evasive answers to officials due to suspicion and fear.

Many times false information were given by the locals about mortality, disease, illness. Always these were not reported. Sometimes the reports and records kept by British government was also biased. However, inspite of ambiguity and biasness, these records and data helped in studying about colonial cities.

Trends of Change:

- Urban population of India remained stagnant during 1800s. In the forty years between 1900 and 1940 the urban population increased from about 10 percent of the total population to about 13 percent.
- Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay were became sprawling cities. They were entry and exit points of goods from the country. Smaller towns had little opportunity to grow. Few towns which were situated on the bank of river like Mirzapur (which specialised in collecting cotton and cotton goods from Deccan) were growing but with introduction of railways its development stopped.
- Expansion of railway led to the formation of railway workshops and railway colonies. Towns like Jamalpur, Waltair and Bareilly developed due to railways.

Towns: A Unique Identity:

Colonial towns reflects a number of features These were important in terms of economic, political and also cultural point of view, which showed a unique identity. They also tell how power was shifted from Indian rulers to the European elites.

Ports, Forts and Centra for Services:

- By 18th century Madras, Calcutta, Bombay, all had important ports and became the economic centre.
- Company built its factories and fortified these settlements for protection. Fort St. George in Madras, Fort William in Calcutta, and the fort in Bombay were famous settlement of that time.
- Indian traders, merchants, artisans who worked with the European merchant lived outside these forts in their own settlement. Settlement of European was called 'White Town' and settlement of Indians was known as 'Black Town'.



- Expansion of railways connected the hinterland to these port cities. So it became convenient to transport raw material and labour to the cities.
- In 19th century, there was expansion of cotton and jute mills in region of Bombay and Calcutta.

There were only two proper industrial cities. Kanpur, which was specialised in leather, woollen and textiles and second city was Jamshedpur, which was specialised in steel. However, Industrial development was lagging behind in India due to discriminatory policies of the British.

A New Urban Milieu:

- Colonial cities reflected the mercantile culture of English. Political power and patronage shifted from Indian rulers to the merchants of the East India company.
 - Indian traders, merchants, middlemen and interpreter who worked with company also enjoyed important place in cities.
 - Ghats and docks were developed. Along the ports, godowns, mercantile office, insurance agencies, transport depots and banking developed. Racially exclusive clubs, racecourses and theatres were built for ruling elite.
 - European merchants and agents lived in palatial house in white town while Indian
 - merchants, middlemen, agents had traditional courtyard houses in Black town.
 - The labouring poor provided service to European and Indian master as cook, palanquin bearer, coachmen, guard, porters and construction and dock worker. They lived in huts in different parts of the city.
 - After revolt the British felt the need that town needed to be more secure of and better defended. So pastureland and agricultural fields around older town were cleared and new urban space called Civil Lines were set up and white people used to live in it. Cantonment were developed as safe enclaves and here Indian troops lived under European command.
 - British considered black town as area characterised by chaos, anarchy, filth and disease.
 - When epidemics of Cholera and Plague spread, they decided to take stringent measure for sanitation, public health, hygiene and cleanliness
- The Development of Hill Stations:



- British Government started developing hill stations initially because of need of British army. Simla (present day Shimla) founded during Gurkha war (1815-16). Anglo-Maratha war led to development of Mount Abu (1818). Darjeeling was taken from the ruler of Sikkim in 1835.
- The temperate and cool climate of hills were seen as sanitarium (places where soldiers could be sent for rest and recovery from illness) because these areas were free from diseases like cholera, malaria, etc.
- Hilly regions and stations became attractive place for European rulers and other elites. During summer season, for recreation they visited these places regularly. Many houses, buildings, and Churches were designed according to European style.
- Later introduction of railway made these places more accessible and upper and middle class Indians like maharajas, lawyers and merchants also started visiting these places regularly.
- Hilly regions were also important regarding economy as tea plantation, coffee plantation flourished in the region. Social Life in the New Cities:
- In cities life seemed always in a flux, there was a great inequality between rich and poor.
- New transport facilities like horse drawn carriage, trains, buses had been developed. People now started travelling, from home to work place using the new mode of transportation.
- Many public places were created, e.g. public parks, theatres, clubs, and cinema halls in 20th century. These places provided entertainment and opportunity for social interaction.
- People started migrating to cities. There were demands of clerks, teachers, lawyers, doctors, engineers and accountants. There were schools, colleges and libraries.
- A new public sphere of debate and discussion emerged. Social norms, customs and practices came to be questioned.
- They provided new opportunities for women. It provided women avenues to get out of their house and become more visible in public life.
- They entered new profession as teacher, theatre and film actress, domestic worker, factory worker, etc.
- Middle class women started to express themselves through the medium of autobiographies, journals and books.



- Conservatives feared these reforms, they feared breaking existing rule of society, and patriarchal order.
- Women who went out of the household had to face opposition and they became object of social censure in those years.
- In cities, there were a class of labourers or the working class. Poor came to cities looking for opportunity, few came to cities to live a new way of life and desire to see the new things.

Life in cities were expensive, jobs were uncertain and sometimes migrants leave their family at native place to save money. Migrants also participated in the Tamashas (folk theatre) and Swangs (satires) and in that way they tried to integrate with the life of cities.

Settlement and Segregation in Madras:

Company first set up its centre at Surat and then tried to occupy east coast. British and French were engaged in Battle in South India, but with defeat of France in 1761, Madras became secure and started to grow as commercial centre.

Fort St. George became the important centre where Europeans lived and it was reserved for English men.

Officials were not permitted to marry Indians. However, other than English Dutch, Portuguese were allowed to live in the fort as they were European and Christian.

Development of Madras was done according to the need of whites. Black town, settlement of Indians, earlier it was outside the fort but later it was shifted.

New Black town resembled traditional Indian town with living quarter around temple and bazaar. There were caste specific neighbourhoods.

Madras was developed by incorporating many nearby villages. City of Madras provided numerous opportunities for local communities.

Different communities perform their specific job in the Madras city, people of different communities started competing for British Government job.

Transport system gradually started to develop. Urbanisation of Madras meant areas between the villages were brought within the city. Town Planning in Calcutta:



Town planning required preparation of a layout of entire urban space and urban land use.

City of Calcutta had been developed from three villages called Sutanati, Kolkata and Govindpur. The company cleared a site of Govindpur village for building a fort there.

Town planning in Calcutta gradually spread from Fort William to other parts. Lord Wellesley played very important role in town planning of Calcutta. Further work of town planning was carried by Lottery committee with the help of government. Funds for town planning were raised by Lotteries.

Committee made a new map for Calcutta, made roads in the city and cleared riverbank of encroachment. Many huts 'bustis' and poors were displaced to make Calcutta cleaner and disease free and these people were shifted to outskirts of Calcutta.

Frequent fires in the city led to making of stricter building regulation. Thatched roofs were banned and tiled roofs were made mandatory.

By the late nineteenth century official intervention in the city became more stringent.

British removed more huts and developed British portion of town at the expense of other areas.

These policies further deepened the racial divide of white town and black town and new division of healthy and unhealthy further arose. Gradually public protest against these policies

strengthened anti-imperialistic feeling and nationalism among Indians.

British wanted the cities like Bombay, Calcutta and Madras to represent the grandeur and authority of the British Empire. Town planning was aimed to represent their meticulous and rational planning and execution along with Western aesthetic ideas.

Architecture in Bombay:

Although, government buildings primarily serving functional needs like defence, administration and commerce but they often meant to showcase ideas of nationalism, religious glory and power.

Bombay has initially seven islands, later it became commercial capital of colonial India and also a centre of international trade.



Bombay port led to the development of Malwa, Sind and Rajasthan and many Indian merchants also become rich.

Bombay led to development of Indian capitalist class which came from diverse communities like Parsi, Marwari, Konkani, Muslim, Gujarati, Bania, Bohra, Jew and Armenian.

Increased demand of cotton, during the time of American civil war and opening of Suez Canal in 1869 led to further economic development of Bombay.

Bombay was declared one of the most important city of India. Indian merchants in Bombay started investing in cotton mills and in building activities.

Many new buildings were built but they were built in European style. It was thought that it would:

give familiar landscape in alien country to European, thus to feel at home in the colony give them a symbol of superiority, authority and power. help in creating distinction between Indian subjects and colonial masters.

For public building, three broad architectural styles were used. These included neo-classical, neo-Gothic and Indo-Saracenic styles. Building and Architectural Styles:

Architecture reflected the aesthetic idea prevalent at that time, building also expressed vision of those who build them. Architectural styles also mould taste, popularise styles and shape the contours of culture.

From the late nineteenth century, regional and national tastes were developed to counter colonial ideal. Style has changed and developed through wider processes of cultural conflict.

Important Terms:

- Kasbah: A small town in the countryside.
- Ganj: Small size fixed market.
- Census: Counting of population
- White Towns: Towns where only European could live.
- Black Towns: Towns where only Indian could live.
- Civil lines: Urban areas where only white people could settle and live.
- Pet: A Tamil word, which means settlement.
- Purim: A Tamil word stands for a village.



Notes

- Dubhasia: Those people who speak English as well as local language.
- Vellars: A local rural community in Madras.
- Garermath: The east India company built the Fort William in Calcutta. From the prospective of its security, a vast open space was left around it. It was locally known as a garer math or maiden.

Time line:

1688 – Bombay was handed over to East India company by the Butanes Empire.

1673 – French established trading centre at Pondichhery.

1757 – Battle of Placey

1798 – Lord Welleseley appointed as the 1st General of Bangal

1807 – Lottery commission was setup at Calcutta.

1814 -16 – Shimla was established.

1836 – That shed huts were banned in Calcutta.

1872 – Attempts were made for 1st census.

1878 – Organisation of survey of India

1881 – Madras harbour was completed.

1896 – Plague began to spread in India cities.

1911 – British transfer their capital from Calcutta to Delhi.

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