

Lecture-8



Permanent Settlement of Bengal

Mahalwari system

- The government of Lord William Bentinck, Governor-General of India (1828 to 1835) introduced the Mahalwari system of land revenue in 1833.
- This system was introduced in North-West Frontier, Agra, Central Province, Gangetic Valley, Punjab, etc.
- This had elements of both the Zamindari and the Ryotwari systems.
- This system divided the land into Mahals. Sometimes, a Mahal was constituted by one or more villages.
- The tax was assessed on the Mahal.
- Each individual farmer gave his share.
- Here also, ownership rights were with the peasants.
- Revenue was collected by the village headman or village leaders.
- It introduced the concept of average rents for different soil classes.
- The state share of the revenue was 66% of the rental value. The settlement was agreed upon for 30 years.
- This system was called the Modified Zamindari system because the village headman virtually became a Zamindar.

Consequences of the British land revenue systems

- Land became a commodity.
- Earlier there was no private ownership of land. Even kings and cultivators did not consider land as his 'private property'.
- Due to the very high taxes, farmers resorted to growing cash crops instead of food crops. This led to food insecurity and even famines.

- Taxes on agricultural produce were moderate during pre-British times. The British made it very high.
- Insistence on cash payment of revenue led to more indebtedness among farmers. Moneylenders became landowners in due course.
- Bonded labour arose because loans were given to farmers/labourers who could not pay it back.
- When India achieved freedom from colonial rule, 7% of the villagers (Zamindars/landowners) owned 75% of the agricultural land.

QUESTIONS:

1. Who established the “Asiatic Society of Bengal” in 1783 AD ?

Ans. Sir William Jones.

2. Which Governor General was impeached by the British Parliament ?

Ans. Warren Hastings.

3. When Pitts India Act was passed ?

Ans. In 1784 AD.

4. When Lord Cornwallis was appointed the Governor General ?

Ans. In 1786 AD.

5. Who introduced the permanent settlement of land in Bengal in 1793 AD?

Ans. Lord Cornwallis.