











Modern Indian History Class 20

2nd December, 2023 at 1:00 PM


PEASANT REVOLTS: (1:10:19 PM):

- Q- The 1857 revolt was a culmination of small and big rebellions in the first hundred years of British rule.
- Q- The 1857 revolt was the biggest peasant revolt.

Grievances of peasants:

- Farming system 1772 in Bengal:  or lardars
- Oppression by **revenue farmers** who extracted high LR.  District Collector
- RF had the support of British officials as collected LR under **DC's** supervision.
- PS 1793:
- Oppression by Zamindars i.e. high rents, illegal abwabs, lack of occupancy rights.
- British officials and British courts supported zamindar as all rights in land legally with zamindars.  Policing power of Zs were taken away and gave occupancy rights to ryots who were cultivating a land for more than 12 years.
- The ineffective implementation of the **Rent Act 1859** in Bengal led to a lack of respect for the occupancy rights of Ryots (on the cultivation of plots for more than 12 years.)  Indigo Revolt: 1859-63
 Pabna Agrarian League: 1873
 Bengal Tenancy Act: 1885
- Ryotwari and Mahalwari;
- Oppression of high LR y British government plus loss of lands by auction by government.
- Indebtedness to moneylenders, high-interest rates on loans, and then loss of land to moneylenders when defaulting on loans.
- Oppression by zamindars where z = landowner.
- Contract farming:  After Indigo commission 1860: Indigo cultivation shifted to Bihar from Bengal.
- Oppression by Indigo planters in **Bengal until 1860 and later Bihar until 1918.**
- They forced ryots to cultivate indigo on part of their occupied land.
- 25 percent- Bengal, 15 percent- Bihar.
- Forced to take loans from planters.
- Were not given the right price for indigo cultivators leading to continued indebtedness to planters.
- Soil productivity hurt.  (* bz contract = legal)
- Oppression by Indian **agents** of planters, British officials, and courts  if Ryot refused to cultivate indigo
- Role of religion;  (* especially pre 1857 peasant revolts)



Grievance that

-  Religion is under threat due to conversions.
- Britishers ended revenue-free tenures on lands of religious sects and institutions i.e. temples and mosques.
- Social reforms by law. EX: Sati Abolition Act 1829, Lex Loci Act 1850 (*Gave R2Inheritance to converts in their ancestor's property.)
Hindu WR marriage Act 1856
- Religion helped in giving organization especially when a sect revolted i.e. unity and a leader who did planning and coordination. (* BJP, Congress, RSS etc. are modern organizations- absent pre 1857)
- Therefore ^{this} ~~their~~ gap is filled by religion.

Grievances of tribals: (2:48:48 PM):

- 2 special aspects of tribals:
- Tribal autonomy. (* in civil and criminal matters)
- Lived away from the mainstream. (* live in hills and forest)
(way of life)
- The agrarian **order** was turned upside down by outsiders. that is
- British government and officials, British laws, British LR systems, British businesses, and Christian missionaries.
- Zamindars from plains, revenue farmers, merchants, moneylenders.
- The primary concern of the British was LR extraction.
- Thus:
- Zamindars of plains were made owners of forestland.
- The land was farmed out to revenue farmers i.e. LR collection was auctioned off to the highest bidder.
- In some cases, tribal chiefs made zamindar and in some cases, Tribal ryots made land owners.
(i.e. paisa chahiye anaaj nhi)
- Due to high LR and **insistence on payment in cash instead of produce**, there was an influx of moneylenders and consequent indebtedness and loss of land.

Therefore

-  There was a grievance of loss of land, high LR, and indebtedness.
- The autonomy of tribal chiefs and tribals hurt due to the application of British law in civil and criminal matters.
- Ex- Banned jhum cultivation. and hunting because Br wanted settled peasant communities paying LR regularly.
- Chenchus of Hyderabad became nearly extinct due to a ban on hunting.
- Loss of home for tribals due to;
- Indian Forest Act 1878, which divided the forest into reserved forest (No access to tribals), **protected forest**, and **uncategorized**.  (* open to all)
- Land acquisition by the government for railroad projects, mining, and forest produce. Especially- Timber. (* used in railways, ships etc.)

 (* tribals can use forest produce but only for personal consumption and not for sale.)

- Also, tribals were made to do forced labor on these projects Forest Rights Act 2006
- Therefore They lost their **forest lands and Right to forest Produce.** (Today- **FRA**, Van **Dhan** Yojana) forest produce
- The entry of Christian missionaries post-1813 led to religious interference.

Introduction example: (3:34:13 PM):

- **WEMC** responded to British rule in the form of socio-religious reforms plus they believed in the benevolence of British rule and that Britain will modernize India. for mains
- They benefitted from jobs created by the British rule. Western Educated Middle Class
- INM leader called pre-1857 revolts- prehistory of modern nationalism.
- It was tribals and peasants who first responded to British rule with **defiance** and often violently. (disobedience)
- Peasant revolts- 2 kinds:
- Civil Uprising- Where leadership of elites i.e. Raja, Zamindar.
- Peasant revolts- where the leadership of peasants.
- Handout for Revolts - document number 16- Peasant revolts.

The topic for the next class is Modern Nationalism