

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:**
- **Oppression by revenue farmers who extracted high LR.**
- **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.**
- **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.**
- **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:**
- **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.**
- **Oppression by Indian agents of planters, British officials, and courts if Ryot refused to cultivate indigo**
- **Role of religion;**

- 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.
- Religion helped in giving organization especially when a sect revolted i.e. unity and a leader who did planning and coordination.
- Therefore their gap is filled by religion.

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

- 2 special aspects of tribals:
- Tribal autonomy.
- Lived away from the mainstream.
- The agrarian order was turned upside down by outsiders.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Land acquisition by the government for railroad projects, mining, and forest produce. Especially- Timber.

- Also, tribals were made to do forced labor on these projects
- They lost their forest lands and Right to forest Produce. (Today- FRA, Van Dhan Yojana)
- 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.
- They benefitted from jobs created by the British rule.
- 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.
- 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